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THESIS

THE HUMOR IN THE PLAYS

of

SIR JAMES M. BARRIE

by

Helen Ann Glynn

(A.B., Emmanuel College, 1934)

submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

\*1935\*

SECTION CHIEF

CHIEF OF POLICE

REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1911

THE CHIEF OF POLICE

AND CONTAINING

THE RECORD OF THE

DEPARTMENT OF THE

CHIEF OF POLICE

FOR THE YEAR 1911

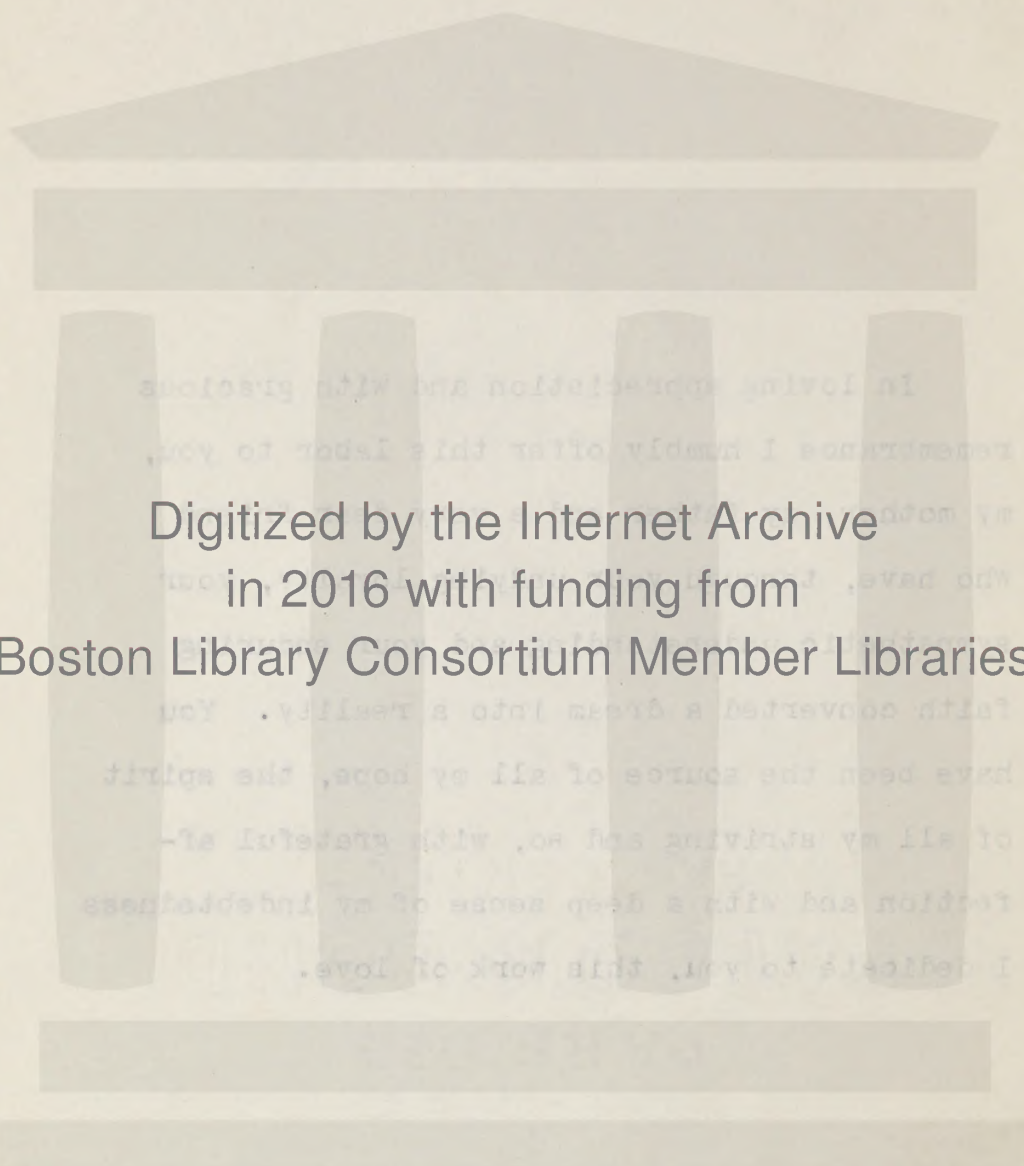
1911



In loving appreciation and with gracious remembrance I humbly offer this labor to you, my mother, my father and a very dear friend who have, through your undying loyalty, your sympathetic understanding and your enduring faith converted a dream into a reality. You have been the source of all my hope, the spirit of all my striving and so, with grateful affection and with a deep sense of my indebtedness I dedicate to you, this work of love.

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## I INTRODUCTION

Barrie first became known to me through the medium of one of his best loved characters--the inimitable Peter Pan. My interest in Peter Pan developed into a desire to become better acquainted with the mind which gave him birth. My wish was satisfied only to a superficial degree when I met Barrie in a College course. This thesis has, then, afforded me a splendid opportunity to study and to know Barrie as I have wished to.

The title of my thesis denotes, and correctly so, the idea that there is humor to be found in Barrie's plays. I believe this as firmly as I believe that there is genius in Shakespeare. It has been my purpose, then, in this thesis, to make a study of that comedy or humor; to analyze and to classify it to some extent at least. It has not been my intention to tell you where you should laugh or where you should merely smile because I fully realize that humor, and particularly Barrie's, is far too elusive and intangible for any such rigid hemming in or tacking down. I have, however, tried to attack this work with a definite plan in mind. I have laid down some generally accepted fundamentals of humor and I have read Barrie's plays with a view to searching for various forms of this humor. With it I have compared





that of Molière, the exponent of the Comedy-of-Manners, and Shaw, the great satirist. I have searched for a philosophy which might underlie the Comic spirit expressed in Barrie's dramas. With a full realization that I am still far from comprehending the depth and largeness of Barrie's gentle, thought-provoking humor, I feel a certain satisfaction. I know Barrie better and, because of this, I like him better, generally as a man and a dramatist and specifically as a humorist.

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There is always some or less difficulty encountered when one attempts to reconstruct the life of a man still living, and the difficulty is multiplied if that man is Barrie. Unusually quiet and reticent about himself, we find that the only information obtainable is that which we glean from his works and that of an unexplored nature. This does not disturb us, however, for we are not going to concern ourselves with dates and places but rather shall we turn our attention to the aspects of Barrie's early life which cast a ray of understanding upon his later years and works; those happenings which exerted an influence upon him that was not to be quick in passing.



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\*\*\*\*\*

## II SIGNIFICANT FACTS IN BARRIE'S LIFE

On the ninth day of May in the year eighteen hundred and sixty, the quaint little village of Kirriemuir, in Forfarshire Scotland, should have reechoed with joy from end to end, for it was on that day that James Matthew Barrie made his debut to the world in which he was to hold so important a place. Little did the friends and neighbors who looked upon the baby as just another Scottish "bairn" realize that he was destined to have his name known and loved in lands far from Scotland's shores; that in the next century he would be heralded as "the foremost living man of letters in the whole world."\*

There is always more or less difficulty encountered when one attempts to recount the life of a man still living, and the difficulty is multiplied if that man is Barrie. Unusually quiet and reticent about himself, we find that the only information obtainable is that which we glean from his works and that of an encyclopaedic nature. This does not disturb us, however, for we are not going to concern ourselves with dates and places but rather shall we turn our attention to the aspects of Barrie's early life which cast a ray of understanding upon his later years and works: those happenings which exerted an influence upon him that was not to be quick in passing.





Barrie was born into and grew up in an atmosphere of romantic tradition, of Scottish folk lore. On all sides of him there were tales of Scotland's brave "lads" or her "bonnie lassies" but to counteract this, there was a rigid spirit of religious austerity. Sunday was kept sacred with an almost cruel duress. The simple pleasures of ordinary life were not to be indulged in on the Sabbath. The reading of literature was held to be immoral and those who offended were looked upon with scorn and contempt by the elders. We are told that "it was a crime to gather wild flowers on that day."\* There was so much concern about the adherence to the letter of the law that the spirit of the Scriptural mandates seemed to lose its significance for them. All this registered upon the very impressionable mind of young Barrie and it was not without effect.

The influence of the romantic element in Barrie's youth is so evident that it scarcely needs to be mentioned. Even the most cursory reader must see the almost limitless power of Barrie's imagination. Could any one but Barrie have produced a Peter Pan, a Maggie Shand, an Island-that-Liked-to-be-Visited, and a Mary Rose? It is to be doubted, indeed. The great fertility of Barrie's mind, then, surely must have been nourished





and aided by the folk-lore and tradition of his native town. They applied the spark of interest to a mind endowed by nature with a love of the unnatural, the unusual. The religious austerity of the time does not seem in any way to have repressed Barrie's mental activities. It was not, however, without its effect. For the most part, it seems, the effect was beneficial. In all of Barrie's plays (and I am sure the same may be said of his novels) there is not the slightest hint of immorality, of indelicacy. There is a certain cleanliness and freshness about Barrie's plays that is invigorating. To turn from some of our modern writers with their disgusting realism and their scorn for the higher, more idealistic things of life, to Barrie the "unoffensive" is like walking from a dank, damp, odorous valley to the top of a beautiful hill where the scent of pine cones and trees and fresh air fills the nostrils. May this not be traced to the influence of religious principles which were inculcated in him as a boy? They seem to have become an inseparable part of him. I doubt very much that he could free himself from them if he would wish to and I think it is even more improbable that he would ever entertain such a desire. Barrie was, however, able to distinguish very subtly between a religion that resided between two covers of a book and





a belief which resided in the heart. This is why, perhaps, we can detect a smile as we read in some of Barrie's plays and in particular in Little Minister of the "auld licht elders" and of my "ain folk". He smiled but he never laughed. In his writing he is very personal. His stories have come to us out of his own heart, his own experiences. J. A. Hammerton goes as far to say that "in a sense, every book he has written has been a further installment of a masterly autobiography." This seems to me to stretch the point a bit too far. There is in the statement, however, much of truth and yet Barrie is still considered a very reticent, very quiet, and retiring person. These characteristics allow us to catch glimpses of the serious side of this Scotch bard's youth.

As Barrie advanced in years and the written word became accessible to his ever-devouring mind, we find that he had the greatest admiration for certain authors and certain books. Almost any who have attained recognition in a literary way have on their library shelves books which have wielded a strong influence upon the literary tastes of their youth. There were, indeed, such men and books in Barrie's life and although we can not say with any pretense at certitude that the well-worn volumes are to be found in the library of Adelphi



a subject which resided in the heart. This is why, perhaps, we can detect a smile as we read in some of Barrie's plays and in particular in Little Minister of the "main light idea" and of my "rain love". He smiled but he never laughed. In his writing he is very personal. His stories have come to us out of his own heart, his own experiences. J. A. Henderson once said to me that "in a sense, every book he has written has been a further installment of a master's autobiography." This seems to me to apply to the point a bit too far. There is in the statement, however, much of truth and yet Barrie himself considered a very reticent, very quiet, and retiring person. These characteristics allow us to catch glimpses of the various sides of this Scotch bard's youth.

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Terrace, Barrie's home, we feel sure such is the case. Perhaps Barrie's greatest literary hero was Robert Louis Stevenson. His admiration was little short of hero worship. He was not, however, content to be a lover of Stevenson himself but exerted all his efforts to win readers for and of him. His mother was one of the earliest victims of his would-be enthusiastic salesmanship of the author. Mrs. Barrie sternly refused to read The Master of Ballantrae, despite her son's malicious persistence in putting the book in her way. For, according to Barrie, Stevenson had committed an unpardonable crime in her eyes: "he wrote books better than mine." She would find it on her table, "so that it said good morning to her when she arose;" or popped up invitingly open against her tea pot; or on top of the clothes basket, with her spectacles for bookmark.\* So Barrie continued these little strategies until he had finally conquered his mother's prejudice, although it was a gradual process and a less enthusiastic proponent would have surrendered much sooner. It was Treasure Island which finally cemented the bond of friendship between the quiet little Scotch lady and the author of adventure and piracy. It is not difficult to imagine wherein lay the mutual attraction between Barrie and Stevenson. Their tastes seemed to run in like channels.



Therefore, Barrie's home, we feel sure, was the same.  
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Barrie "devoured, when in funds, 'penny dreadfuls,' magazines containing exclusively sanguinary matter, largely tales about heroic highwaymen and piracy on the high seas."\* These two lovers of adventure became devoted friends although separated by no few miles. The extent of Stevenson's influence upon Barrie can not be definitely outlined but we may be quite certain it was considerable. Stevenson, after reading the Life of Scott spoke to one of his clerks in words that might well have been Barrie's or which might at least have been used to classify Barrie's writing. Stevenson said, "As I live, I feel more and more that literature should be cheerful and brave-spirited, even if it can not be made beautiful and pious and heroic. We wish it to be a green place----."\*\* "Cheerful"--"brave-spirited"--no more suitable words could be found to identify Barrie's works and particularly his plays-- What Every Woman Knows, Peter Pan.

James Fennimore Cooper's "penny dreadfuls" came in for a good share of Barrie's admiration. Undoubtedly it was a love of adventure that caused Barrie to be attracted to Cooper. Thomas Moulton in mentioning this fellow feeling for the author of such exciting and then unusual books as The Last of the Mohicans tells us that it resulted in one of Barrie's most pleasant friend-



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ships while in Dumfries Academy. Barrie and the "new boy" seemed to have that proverbial chip on their shoulder. They could find no common ground until our author heard the lad say, "Pathfinder." Barrie immediately answered "Chingachgook" and at that moment their differences all converged to form a strong point of similarity--a love for the "fiction favorite of the time."

After Barrie had concluded his studies at Edinburgh University he answered an advertisement in the paper which secured for him a position on the Nottingham Journal. Whether he was fortunate or unfortunate in beginning his literary career in such a way is difficult to determine. Something can be said both "pro" and "con," I suppose. At least everyone must recognize that it must have been one of the most effective influences on his later literary life. Thomas Moulton looks upon his early journalistic career as an unfortunate circumstance. In part he says: "Barrie's education as a newspaper man was swift, and from the standpoint of literary idealism, more or less devastating. Soon he had learnt all that is to be known about the editorial management of what, safely disguised as the object of contempt in his novel, he did not hesitate to describe as a third rate newspaper."\* Hammerton says that the





"capacity for wonder had gone out of him, and the art of the leader-writer became little else than writing readably, authoritatively, and always in three paragraphs on a subject he knows nothing about."\* The author infers that the sarcasm here is aimed at his own work on the Nottingham Journal.. This is, no doubt, true but it is not all. If journalistic writing did affect his literary idealism it was not to do him any permanent damage. I do not think there is any trace of Barrie, the journalist, in Barrie, the dramatist. There is none of the fawning to public opinion, none of the controversial attitude, none of the haste and carelessness which we are prone to attribute to scribes of our own time, to be found in Barrie of later years.

There is, none the less, one definite result of Mr. Barrie's sojourn into newspaper work and that is the novel, When a Man's Single. It gives an insight into the newspaper office and sometimes into the heart of the leader-writer. The Nottingham Journal, he dresses up as the Daily Mirror. In itself the novel is of little literary value. Barrie, a few years after its composition admitted that it was M'Connachie who wrote it. M'Connachie was the name which he applied to himself when he was a writer with "a journalist at his elbow."





There is another and more favorable side, however, to this journalistic influence. He had always wanted to write and he was placed immediately in a workshop. Perhaps the tools which he was given and with which he was to make the beginning of his literary career were not just what he wanted, were not exactly best suited for him. The fact remains, however, that they were tools and they did the job to some extent at least. He had to write and write and write. Surely all this practice must have been of some benefit. At least it must have taught him "an economy of words, an almost uncanny sense of proportion and orderly argument which few writers can command of their own mere motion."\*

There was another influence in Barrie's life which, in order of importance, must be rated first. I have reference to the great power which his mother, both during her life time and after her death, exerted over him. Margaret Ogilvy, (it is the custom even now though to a lesser degree for Scotch women to be called by their maiden names) was the brightest light in the life of her son. His affection for her was almost without limit. "I weaved sufficiently well to please her," says Barrie, "which has been my only steadfast ambition since I was a little boy."\*\* He wrote for her and often of her. Margaret Ogilvy best bespeaks his devotion to





her. It is a glorious tribute to a Mother who well deserved it. Barrie revealed with an unashamed honesty the love he bore his mother. He was censured for "making copy" of her but when the full meaning of this work of love was felt, when its unfeigned sincerity could no longer be honestly doubted, then its real significance was realized. Throughout Barrie's work we can trace the guiding hand, the sympathetic heart, the masterful mind of Margaret Ogilvy. In the son we can see characteristics of the mother. In his writings it is as if she had mixed the ink with which he penned his thoughts. Into this ink she poured a good portion of unflinching wit, of gentle, thought-provoking humor, of deep tenderness, of striking pathos, of laughter, of tears, of all that makes Barrie's writings so important in the literary life of the twentieth century. She is the one influence that has guided, motivated and inspired his whole life. Nor did her influence cease when she passed out of this life. Her spirit has accompanied Barrie in all his undertakings. So all-powerful was her influence that even the cold, conductorless grave was conquered by it. The gruesome casket might confine her body but it never could hold her spirit within its eerie confines for she had left it in her son. Barrie avows that "the love of mother and son has written



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everything of mine that is of any worth," and that all his first books came into existence to please "one woman who is now dead."\* In another passage Barrie very nobly and touchingly pays honor to his mother. In part he says: "In her happiest moments--and never was a happier woman--her mouth did not of a sudden begin to twitch, and tears to lie on the mute blue eyes in which I have read all I know and all I would ever care to write. For when you looked into my mother's eyes you knew, as if he had told you, why God had sent her into the world--it was to open the minds of all who looked to beautiful thoughts. And that is the beginning and end of literature. Those eyes that I can not see until I was six years old have guided me through life, and I pray God that they may remain my only earthly judge to the last. They were never more my guide than when I helped to put her to earth, not whimpering because my mother had been taken away after seventy-six glorious years of life, but exulting in her even at the grave."\*\* A truly immeasurable power for goodness and greatness was Margaret Ogilvy! How much, how very much of the humor which is to be found in James M. Barrie's plays must have had birth in her heart! We shall never know. Through her son we pay her tribute.

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## III HUMOR

The definition of humor is not only a difficult task; it verges upon the impossible. It is one of those words which defy rigid classification. In the case of the word humor there are several factors which make this especially true. Primarily, there are so many various types of humor which closely approach each other in meaning. Then too, humor is necessarily dependent upon many conditions and circumstances, such as the attitude, the facial expression, the gestures, the time and the place of the expression or the act. The audience, too, must be considered. There are, however, some fundamental principles which underlie humor and it is these which we shall attempt to discover in order that we shall have some common conceptions upon which to base our study of Barrie's humor.

The word humor has enjoyed an interesting life. Several times it has been so altered and redecorated that we should scarce recognize it: "In ancient medical physiology the word was applied to the four fluids supposedly in man's body. They were called the cardinal humors"\* and were supposed to determine the temperament of the individual. Later, if a man was particularly light-hearted and cheerful and had in general the

\*An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English John Murray





characteristics of a sanguinary person it was said that he had an excess of that humor and so for the other three types. It came then to be applied to the eccentricity in the speech or in the actions of an individual. It was Ben Jonson who used the word to denote something ludicrous and jocose. He wrote comedies of humors which dealt not with men's crimes but with their follies and foibles. It was he, really, who took the word out of medical books and put it into drama. In his prologue to Everyman in His Humour, he clearly states in what manner and sense he is to use the word.

He rather prays you will be pleased to  
see

One such today as other plays should be;  
Where neither chorus wafts you o'er the  
seas,

Nor creaking throne comes down the boys  
to please,

Nor nimble squib is seen to make afear'd  
The gentlewomen, nor rolled bullet heard  
To say it thunders nor tempestuous drum  
Rumbles to tell you when the storm doth  
come;

But deeds and language such as men do use  
And persons such as comedy would choose  
When she would show an image of the times  
And sport with human follies, not with  
crimes;

Except we make 'em such, by loving still  
Our popular errors, when we know they're  
ill.

Jonson's use of the word came to be generally accepted and it practically is in that sense that we have it





today. It has, however, become considerably more comprehensive. It is used more loosely. Those who are more discriminating do make some distinction but to the average person humorous is merely a more learned word for funny.

That we may have some common ground upon which to stand in our search for humor in Barrie's plays we shall have to definitely decide what we are to include under the word, what to exclude. We shall not trust our own opinions of others. To these we shall add what we understand humor to be and then we shall attempt to draw conclusions as to what humor shall comprehend in this thesis.

Ashley Thorndike has written a book on English Comedy, and in it he says, "There are few places this side of the grave which humor cannot lighten, few austerities that will not soften under its contrasts."\* This would assign to humor the task of being kind, of elevating rather than of pressing down. It is something noble that appeals not to man's bestial nature but rather to his rational sense, and yet it could not subsist were it nourished only by the head. It must appeal to the heart and the mind. Carlyle in borrowing from Paul Richter includes this idea of thought and sentiment as essentials of humor in his very inclusive



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side of the grave which humor cannot lighten, the a-  
bilities that will not soften under the weight of  
This would assign to humor the task of easing things, of  
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thing which that appeals not to man's bodily nature  
but rather to his rational sense, and yet it could not  
subsist were it nourished only by the body. It must  
appeal to the heart and the mind. Verily in borrowing  
from Paul Richter I find this idea of thought and  
sentiment as essentials of humor in his very inclusive

discussion on the subject. In part he says, "True humor springs not more from the head than from the heart, it is not contempt, its essence is love, it issues not in laughter but in smiles which lie far deeper. It is sort of inverse sublimity, exalting as it were, into our affection what is below us, which sublimity draws down into our affections what is above us."\* Thackeray, in a very few words conveys the same idea of mind and heart when he says, "Humor is a mixture of love and wit." George Meredith says that "you may estimate your capacity for comic perception by being able to detect the ridicule of those you love, without loving them less.\*\* In the preceding opinions of the essence of humor it occurred to me that satire could scarcely be said to be allowed for. At what point does comedy verge into satire? Samuel Wilcox in speaking of humor grants a certain type of comedy which I think also might correctly be construed to allude to satire. "Genuine humor," he says, "is founded on a deep, thoughtful and manly character. It would make men laugh more heartily in order to make them live more happily...Humor, if true, is kind and reformatory.\*\*\* Kindness, geniality, sympathy all must be present in true humor.. Humor should not make any one uncomfortable, it should not laugh at men, it should laugh with them. "Humor and

\*Ashley Thorndike  
 \*\*George Meredith  
 \*\*\*Samuel Wilcox

English Comedy Page 14-15  
 Essay On English Comedy Page 36  
 Why We Laugh Page 12





pathos are twin-born: the humorist laughs through tears." Pathos-a new word in our idea of humor.. And still it is not new for it has really been implied in the previous mentions of humor. It is closely allied to sympathy, to kindness and cleverness. It is really what distinguishes wit from true humor. In another place in the same book William Matthews very truly says: "The richest rarest, most exquisite humor is more clearly allied to a tear than to a broad grin."\* How closely this brings us to Barrie's humor. He has been called the tear and laughter-monger. Has he not earned the title? Think of good, noble but odd little Maggie Shand, of quiet, kind but quaint Phoebe Throssel.

Perhaps it might be well before we conclude our discussion of humor--what it is and what it is not--to go directly to James M. Barrie himself for his ideas on the subject. I have been able to find no direct reference as to what he thinks humor is. He has, however, spoken through one of his characters. In A Window in Thrums, we find a chapter entitled "A Humorist on His Calling." It was evening--after supper and the men had gathered to discuss almost any timely subject. It was really an informal little debate which ensued each evening. On this particular night there was in the group one Tammas Haggart who was known for his great wisdom and his unusual ability to speak "wi' sort O' faceelity."



...and ... the ... through ...  
 ... in our ... and still it  
 ... is not ... it has really been ... in the ...  
 ... of humor. It is closely allied to ...  
 ... to kindness and ... It is really what  
 ... in another place ...  
 ... in the same ... very ...  
 ... most ... is more ...  
 ... to a ... "how ...  
 ... He has been called  
 ... the ... Has he not earned the  
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 ... to speak ... "necessity."

It was a source of wonder to the men and they were discussing this great gift. The following conversation ensued:

"If I was bidden to put Tammas's gift in a word," said T'nowhead, "I would say at he had a wy. That's what I would say."

"Weel, I suppose I have," Tammas admitted, "but wy or no wy, I couldna put a point on my words if it wasna for my sense o' humor. Lads, humor's what gies the nip to speakin'!"

"It's what makes ye a sarcecticist, Tammas," said Hendry, "but what I wonder at is yer sayin' the humorous things sae aisy like. Some says ye mak them up aforehand, but I ken that's no true."

"No only is't no true," said Tammas, "but it couldna be true. Them 'at says sic things, an' weel I ken you're meanin' Davit Lunan, hasna nae idea o' what humor is. It's a thing at spouts oot o' its ain accord. Some o' the maist humorous things I've ever said came oot as a body may say, by themselves.".....

"Tammas explained, "humor has twa sides just like a penny piece. When I say a humorous thing mysel, I'm dependent on other folks to tak note o' the humor o't, being mysel ta'en up wi' the makkin o't. Ay, but there's things I see and hear at makes me lauch, an' that's the other side o' humor".....

"An' what's mair, the mere lauchin's no the important side o' humor, even though ye hinna to be telt to lauch.... The humorist's like a man fixin' at a target-he doesna ken whether he or not till them at the target tells 'im."

The listeners interrupted with their theories but Tammas always shook his head wisely and undertook to enlighten them. He continued: "The real humorist kens nara weel 'at there's subjects without a spark o' humor in them. When a subject rises to the sublime it should be negairded philosophically, an' no humorously."

I firmly believe that Barrie has set forth, in part at least his theory of humor in the dialogue which has been quoted. He has infered there that humor should not





be forced, it should be spontaneous, natural and easy, Good humor gives a lively touch to conversation. Barrie infers when he says "It gies the nip to speakin'!" Lastly he treats the subjects suitable for humor. He very characteristically points out that true humor gives no berth to irreverence either in the subject itself or in the treatment of that subject.

What then shall we include in the term humor? What shall we exclude? First, I think we must make a distinction between two words which are closely allied but which are not identical in meaning. I refer to wit and humor. If we do this we shall necessarily segregate wit in its various forms from humor.

William Matthews has drawn a very distinct line between these two forms of comedy. "Wit is always conscious and personal; humor is generally unconscious and impersonal. The essence of wit is cleverness, sharpness, hawk-eyed mental cunning, the essence of humor is sensibility,--warm tender fellow-feeling with all forms of existence. Wit implies thought; humor, feeling. Wit is analytical, antagonistic, and destructive; humor on the contrary, is genial, kindly, and sympathetic;"\* Perhaps one of the most common forms of wit is the much abused pun. It is generally believed that "the sense of the comic is much blunted by habits of punning



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 Wit is analytical, antagonistic, and destructive; humor  
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 Perhaps one of the most common forms of wit is the  
 much abused pun. It is generally believed that the  
 sense of the pun is much dimmed by habits of punning

and of using humoristic phrase.\* Whether or not that is absolutely true is beside the point, for however intelligent is the pun it is still a subdivision of wit and wit is not in any way to be included in our use of the word humor. Epigrams, too, are a form of wit and and so also must be discarded. Some of them are very good--some even quite artistic but they lack that undercurrent of feeling which humor implies. They, like puns, fail when the test of true comedy is applied. They do not awaken a laughter which arises simultaneously in the heart and in the mind.

fully aware, it is to be noted the third word in the subject, it might not stand the test which others might apply to it. For my part \*\*\*\*\* the language I have used seemed most suitable. The first main topic is comedy of manners, under which I have included The Admirable Crichton, Little Minister, and Alice Sit-by-the-fire. Several of the plays I have dealt with through the characters in them, which I considered most representative of the humor in the plays. Some of these characters are, Crichton, Sney, Melphie, Maggie Shand, Scotch Thistle and Mrs. Powney. Other plays which are placed most successfully under Fantasy. Enter Val, Exit Lord, Dear Doctor, Play for Cinderella are among these. Still more of the plays, it seemed,



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#### IV BARRIE'S HUMOR ILLUSTRATED

##### A. Classification of Plays

I am quite certain that Barrie never intended his plays to be classified. The attempt which I have made to organize them under various headings has been, without a doubt, the greatest difficulty I have encountered in my work. Some plays, I found would fit under almost any heading while others simply would not mold themselves to any division which I could conceive. I have, however, chosen general headings under which I feel that most of the plays will fit. My choice, I am fully aware, is by no means the final word on the subject. It might not stand the test which others might apply to it. For my purpose, however, the headings I have used seemed most workable. The first main topic is comedy of manners, under which I have included The Admirable Crichton, Little Minister, and Alice Sit-by-the-Fire. Several of the plays I have dealt with through the characters in them, which I considered most representative of the humor in the plays. Some of these characters are, Crichton, Matey, Dolphin, Maggie Shand, Phoebe Throssel and Mrs. Downey. Other plays seemed to be classed most successfully under fantasy. Peter Pan, Mary Rose, Dear Brutus, Kiss for Cinderella are among these. Still more of the plays, it seemed,





were humorous chiefly because of their unusual and original stage directions. Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire, What Every Woman Knows, Pantaloon, The Old Lady Shows Her Medals, seem to me to best illustrate this point. There is some overlapping in titles, but it was practically unavoidable. I have, however, tried to avoid repetition in my treatment of the plays.

#### B. Comedy of Manners

The comedy of manners has been employed by Barrie most successfully in the Admirable Crichton. First we must agree upon what is meant by a comedy of manners. What are its essential characteristics? Brander Matthews says: "The comedy of manners deals with life sincerely and satirically without exaggerated caricature in the character-drawing and without fun-making in the episodes."\* There must be, then, a certain incongruity perceptible by the audience. There must be amusement and yet there must be purpose. "The real point of the joke is that man is pretending to be civilized. This is the stock joke of the comedy of manners. The elaborate ritual of society is a mask through which the natural man is comically seen to look."\*\* In the comedy of manners we shall expect to see human beings through the eyes of a humorist and a satirist. We shall see what a queer people we are. Our weaknesses will be shown to us





through a mirror which is specially constructed to reflect incongruities. We shall, however, enjoy a laugh at our own expense unless we are wholly without a sense of humor; and if that is true, others will have more cause to laugh. The Admirable Crichton, I think, follows the requirements for a true risible and yet purposeful comedy of manners. The satire and the comedy are very delicately blended, giving us the impression that we can laugh without being accused of rudeness on the one hand or of insipidity on the other.

"The Admirable Crichton," says J. M. Bullocks, "is the greatest thing Barrie had done in the art of creation."\* If Barrie is known by any single work it is surely by this comedy of manners, this satire. It was not the play which gained for him a place among contemporary dramatists but it was certainly this drama in large part enabled him to maintain the reputation which Little Minister had earned for him. "Never has there appeared on the stage a modern comedy of such poetic sweep and good humor and deep satire."\*\*

The story of The Admirable Crichton is so familiar that it is scarcely necessary to repeat it. A skeleton outline will therefore be sufficient for us to have as ground work. Lord Loam, a peer whose incessant outcry was for a return to nature and for equality, tendered

\*Mr. Barrie, as a Dramatist Lamp 26:28-35 Feb. '03

\*\*Current Literature 36:73-74 Jan. '04





a tea periodically to his servants. The servants became the guests while his daughters served as hostesses. This practice met with the particular disapproval of Crichton, the staid and "conventional" butler. In a very short time Lord Loam was to see his ideas of democracy put to a true test. While on a yachting trip the Lord's party is cast up upon an island. At once Crichton assumes full charge and later he is elected "Governor" of their sea-surrounded home. Circumstances alter cases. Yes, indeed. When, however, the circumstances are again changed, the case changes too. After two years upon the island, the group are rescued and they return to England. Crichton is no longer "Gov" but is once again the perfect butler. Lord Loam reassumes command of his household and once more class distinction reigns.

Surely there is a sound and permanent humor in this basic situation. The idea in itself is certainly laughable. "to transport a well-ordered upper-class English household to an uninhabited tropical island and compel it to emulate the Swiss Family Robinson and show who and what will survive in such circumstances is a rich idea even in this comparatively classless day."\* There is, however, more to this play than a surface humor. It is a keen satire upon the aristocracy of England. Barrie derides it in its valiant effort to

\*Arthur Ruhl N. Y. Herald Tribune



a few months before the war. The servants had  
come the night before his departure and he had  
this meeting with the particular approval of  
Orison, the state and "conventional" ruler. In a  
very short time Lord was to see his ideas of democ-  
racy put to a true test. While on a yachting trip the  
Lord's party is cast up upon an island. At once Orison  
assumes full charge and later he is elected "Governor"  
of their sea-surrounded home. Circumstances after some  
Yes, indeed. When, however, the circumstances are again  
changed, the case changes too. After two years upon the  
island, the group are rescued and they return to England.  
Orison is no longer "Gov" but is once again the  
rarest ruler. Lord soon resumes command of his  
household and once more these distinct periods.  
Surely there is a sound and permanent power in this  
kind of action. The film itself is certainly  
impossible. "To transport a well-ordered upper-class  
English household to an unpopulated tropical island and  
expect it to survive the same family problems and show  
how and what will survive in such circumstances is a  
rich idea even in this comparatively classless day."  
There is, however, more to this play than a surface  
charm. It is a keen satire upon the aristocracy of  
England. Little wonder it is its vibrant effort to

become unduly democratic. He pokes fun at the worthless, witty young man who is clever and nothing else; he smiles amusedly at the stupidity of the upper class woman with her foolish absurd ideas. All this he does with the finesse of a brilliant satirist, the suavity of a gentle humorist.

The social satire is not slow in beginning. We are conscious of it from the very opening lines of the drama.

Ernest. I perceive, from the tea cups, Crichton, that the great function is to take place.  
Crichton. (with a respectful sigh) Yes, sir.

Poor Crichton! "A respectful sigh, " says Barrie. Here we have the dutiful butler like the proverbial lamb being led to the slaughter. Not one word shall he say against his Lordship, but his sigh tells all.

The epigrammatic and humorous Ernest pushes the painful subject until Crichton withdraws with one more heavy sigh which denotes a very disturbed Crichton. Our attention is diverted for a time at least from the social problem which is being unfolded in our presence to a more personal and perhaps more rollickingly humorous satire. It is upon the person of Ernest. With a view to making a speech before the servants he poses upon a foot-stool which Crichton has mutely suggested he use. A smile that is likely to broaden into an unwilling grin and perchance a laugh is cut short only by the



become mainly democratic. He looks on at the world, as  
witty young men who are clever and nothing else; he  
laughs scornfully at the stupidity of the upper class  
women who are so often in the way. All this he does  
with the grace of a brilliant satirist, the ease  
of a facile humorist.

The social satire is not slow in beginning. We are  
conscious of it from the very opening lines of the drama.  
Ernest, I perceive, from the first, is a  
man whose great function is to cause pain.  
Ernest. (With a respectful sigh) Yes, sir.  
Poor Ernest! "A respectful sigh," says Burke.

There we have the social satire like the proverbial  
lamp being led to the altar. Not one word and  
he has satirized his neighbor, but his sigh tells all.

The epigrammatic and humorous Ernest touches the pain-  
ful and sensitive of the world with one more  
heavy sigh which denotes a very ill-used Ernest. The  
attention is directed for a time at least from the  
social problem which is being noticed in our presence  
to a more personal and perhaps more realistically human  
satire. It is upon the person of Ernest. With a view  
to making a speech before the assembly he goes upon  
a foot-stool which Ernest has hastily suggested he use.  
A smile that is likely to broaden into an unwilling  
grin and perhaps a laugh is cut short only by the

entrance of Lord Loam's daughters. Here we are afforded further amusement. They are very bored young women. In fact, Barrie calls them lazy and Barrie should know because he created them. A very insipid conversation takes place between these "young things of aristocracy." Lady Mary enters. She is a beautiful creature but also "very tired."

Lady Mary. It is only you, Ernest. I thought there was some one here (and she also bestows herself on cushions.)

Ernest (a little piqued, and deserting the foot-stool). Had a very tiring day also, Mary?

Lady Mary. (yawning) Dreadfully. Been trying on engagement rings all morning.

Ernest, betraying the interest one would expect of a member of the sewing circle in such a matter, would have led this scene right into farce had not the ladies the good sense to fall asleep on him.

This light bantering comedy continues throughout the act and is deepened here and there by the entrance of Crichton who we see so soon is the only one who is sensible through and through--the imperturbable and sagacious Crichton. The party itself is an excruciating affair for our butler friend; but Lord Loam, with the attitude of one who is democratic to the very depth of his stupid heart, smiles benignly upon his friends who were formerly his servants. Lord Loam, with a further effort at equality, decides to make a speech. He begins,



entirety of Lord Lonsdale's daughter. Here we are afforded  
further amusement. They are very much young women.  
In fact, Charlie calls them lazy and Charlie should know  
because he attended them. A very useful conversation  
takes place between these "young things of aristocracy."  
Lady Mary speaks. This is a somewhat interesting but  
also "very tired."

Lady Mary. It is only now, I think, I thought there  
was some one here (and she also knows  
herself on the subject).  
Almost (a little tired, and generally the poor-people).  
Had a very kind, very kind, very kind.  
Lady Mary. (Sighing) Really. Good evening to  
everyone and all.

Friend, looking the interest one would expect of  
a member of the ruling circle in such a matter, would  
have had this scene right into force and not the ladies  
the good sense to tell each other on him.

This light bantering comedy continues throughout the  
act and is dispensed here and there by the entrance of  
Elizabeth who we see as soon as the only one who is really  
the thing and through the importance and suggestion  
of the party itself is an extraordinary thing.  
For our better friend; but Lord Lonsdale with the attitude  
of one who is dissatisfied to the very depth of his  
stupid heart, smiles condescendingly upon his friends who were  
formerly his enemies. Lord Lonsdale with a further  
effort at opaquely decided to make a speech. He begins,

of course, with the fraternal greeting, "my friends." Barrie has made the most of this speech. Through it he reveals Lord Loam's character as we might expect, but still more adroitly does he allow us glimpses of Crichton's character.

Lord Loam. My friends, I am glad to see you all looking so happy. It used to be predicted by the scoffer that these meetings would prove distasteful to you. Are they distasteful? I hear you laughing at the question.

(He has not heard them, but he hears them now, the watchful Crichton giving them a lead.)

And Lord Loam thinks he has created equality among his household! His servants must laugh when he suggests--not when they feel "moved by the spirit" and, of course, Crichton again rises to the occasion by being the perfect servant even while he is the social equal of a Lord. So, the speech by this quaint Englishman who is so thoroughly pleased with himself continues until at the end when he will insist on quoting a proverb, his memory fails him. Again Crichton comes to the foreground and rescues the bewildered creature from his self-inflicted plight.

In the second act there is no letting up in the comedy. As a matter of fact, it seems to have deepened along with the satire. In the first act we heard about and caught a glimpse of Lord Loam's "nature and equality."



of course, with the traditional greeting, "My friends,"  
Barnes has made the most of this speech. Through it  
he reveals Lord Loom's character as we might expect,  
but still more ably does he allow us glimpses of  
Orickton's character.

My friends, I am glad to see you all  
looking so happy. It used to be  
dictated by the doctor that these meetings  
would prove disastrous to you. But  
they didn't! I hear you laughing  
at the question.  
(He has not heard them, but he hears them now, the  
wonderful Orickton giving them a lesson.)

And Lord Loom thinks he has created equality among  
his household! His servants must laugh when he suggests--  
not when they feel "moved by the spirit" and, of course,  
Orickton again rises on the occasion by being the perfect  
servant even while he is the social equal of a lord.  
So, the speech by this great Englishman was in so  
thoroughly pleased with himself continues until at the  
end when he will insist on getting a property, his  
memory tells him. Again Orickton comes to the fore-  
ground and reveals the bewildered creature from his  
self-inflicted pain.

In the second act there is no letting up in the  
comedy. As a matter of fact, it seems to have deepened  
along with the satire. In the first act we heard about  
and saw the glimpse of Lord Loom's nature and equality."

Here we see it coming into being. Perhaps the first really humorous scene occurs when the great Lord Loam crawls out of the bushes on his hands and knees. Could anything more fittingly or completely express the fact that a respectable social figure has been dethroned? The poor man in his own estimation is a tragic figure. He tries to maintain his dignity and rank, but who ever heard of anyone crawling on his hands and knees feeling dignified? The real humor of the situation strikes us when Barrie very gently nudges us and says, "I told you so." We remember that this is the man who wanted to revert to nature. He certainly has, we should say. Throughout this scene Crichton is gaining ground. Poor Ernest (poor here having the significance of a sigh and a smile) is proving much more ornamental than he is useful. Crichton gives the masterful stroke when he insists that Ernest work or--

Crichton. Until a ship comes we are three men who are going to do our best for you ladies.

Lady Mary. (with a curl of her) Mr. Ernest does no work.

Crichton. But he will my lady.

Lady Mary. I doubt it.

Crichton. No work--no dinner--will make a great change in Mr. Ernest.

.....

Lady Mary. Your manners strike me as curious.

Crichton. (pained) I hope not, your ladyship.

Lady Mary. (determined to have it out with him). You are not implying anything so unnatural, I hope, as that if I and my sisters



Here we see a coming into being. Perhaps the first  
 really important scene occurs when the great Lord comes  
 crawling out of the bushes on his hands and knees. Could  
 anything be fittingly or completely expressed in such  
 that a respectable social figure has been debased?  
 The poor man in his own estimation is a creature fit  
 to be used to maintain his dignity and rank, but who ever  
 heard of anyone crawling on his hands and knees feeling  
 anything? The real humor of the situation strikes us  
 when we see the very gently mannered and says, "I told  
 you so," as if to say that this is the man who wanted to  
 revert to nature. He certainly had, we should say.  
 Throughout this scene Crickton is gaining ground. Poor  
 Ernest (poor dear having the significance of a ship and  
 a table) is moving toward more ornamental than he is  
 ornate. Crickton gives the masterful stroke when he in-  
 sists that Ernest work on--  
 Crickton. Until a ship comes we are the man who  
 are going to do our best for you ladies.  
 Lady Mary. (With a sniff of her) Mr. Ernest does so  
 well.  
 Crickton. But he will my lady.  
 Lady Mary. I doubt it.  
 Crickton. He will--no dinner--will make a great  
 dinner in Mr. Ernest.

Lady Mary. Your manner strikes me as curious.  
 Crickton. (Sneering) I hope not, your ladyship.  
 Lady Mary. (Determined to have it out with him). You  
 are not implying anything is unusual?  
 I hope, as that if I and my sisters

don't work there will be no dinner for us.  
 Crichton. (brightly) If it is unnatural, my lady, that is the end of it.

If we were recording the strokes by which Crichton raised himself to the head of the group, we should be sure to note Crichton's "unnatural." This heightens the satire, and with it the comedy is raised. We can laugh and laugh without apology for rudeness, for nothing more than pride has been hurt. As we near the conclusion of the second act we find the conditions have been completely reversed. Crichton is decidedly and unquestionably master of the situation, and Lord Loam and Lady Mary and Catherine and Agatha--well, they have become very insignificant "Crichtons."

Act three opens upon the same scene, and we are amused with the same sort of comedy and satire. Crichton is the super-man and maintains his place not merely by physical capabilities but by mental as well. He, the servant, the underling, is the only person who has brought a book. He quotes Henley to Polly (who is Lady Mary). This is only a trivial matter but how indicative of character and how firmly it strengthens the superiority of Crichton over the rest of the group. It says so much in so very little. This method of suggestion is used very frequently by Barrie and with



and's work there will be no dinner for  
us.  
Christen. (Sighing) It is so unusual, my lady,  
that is the end of it.

If we were wearing the clothes by which Christen  
raised himself to the head of the group, we should be  
known to none Christen's "unhappy". This happiness  
the entire, and with it the comedy is raised. We can  
laugh and laugh without apology for ourselves, for  
nothing more than pride has been hurt. As we hear  
the resolution of the second act we find the conditions  
have been completely reversed. Christen is decidedly  
and unquestionably master of the situation, and Lord  
Lorne and Lady Mary and Catherine and Alfred-well,  
they have become very insignificant "Christens".  
And three years ago the same scene, and we are  
amused with the same sort of comedy and satire. Christen  
is the upstart and maintains his place not merely by  
physical capabilities but by mental as well. In the  
past, the underlying, is the only person who has  
brought a book. He quotes Henry to Polly (who is  
Lady Mary). This is only a trivial matter but how  
indicative of character and how firmly it strengthens  
the superiority of Christen over the rest of the group.  
It says as much in so very little. This notion of  
superiority is used very frequently by Charlie and with

no little success. Some one has said that Barrie's secret of charm and interest lay in the fact that he grasped the significance of the trivialities of life and had the great gift of being able to express them with a deftness that makes the reader conscious of their importance. This little reference to the book might well be used, it seems, to substantiate this point. Only a small matter indeed, but it was exactly what was needed to complete Crichton's superiority over the aristocracy of England personified in the poor benighted Lord Loam and his daughters. The humor in the remainder of this act revolves around the characters of Crichton and Lady Mary. They have decided that they have been created for each other, and Crichton tries to express the emotion he feels. The result is laughable because Crichton along with the fact that he is a man attempting to do that most terrifying, embarrassing thing--namely to propose--is troubled with an inferiority complex (to give this a modern turn), and it is constantly popping up to disturb him.

Lady Mary. (bewitched)--I want you to tell me--  
eve every woman likes ot know--when was the first time you thought me nicer than the others?

Crichton. (stroking her hair) I think a year ago. We were chasing goats on the Big Slopes, and you out distanced us all; you were the first of our party to run a goat down; I was proud of you that day.

Lady Mary. Oh'Gov, I only did it to please you.



no little success. Some one has said that Hawthorne's secret of charm and interest lay in the fact that he grasped the significance of the trivialities of life and had the great gift of being able to express them with a deftness that makes the reader conscious of their importance. This little reference to the book might well be used, it seems, to substantiate this point. Only a small matter indeed, but it was exactly what was needed to complete Hawthorne's superiority over the aristocracy of England transplanted in the poor benighted land of New England. The humor in the remainder of this act revolves around the characters of Elton and Lady Mary. They have decided that they have been created for each other, and Elton tries to express the emotion he feels. The result is laughable because Elton along with the fact that he is a man attempting to do what most terrifying, embarrassing thing--namely to propose--is troubled with an inferiority complex (to give this a modern turn), and it is constantly coming up to disturb him.

Lady Mary. (Whispered)--I want you to tell me--  
every woman likes to know--when was the  
first time you thought me nice--than  
the others?  
Elton. (Looking her over.) I think a year ago.  
We were dancing--on the old steps,  
and you out of all--said to me: you were  
the first of our party to say a good  
word; I was proud of you that day.  
Lady Mary. Oh, God, I only wish it to please you.

(Suddenly anxious) If I thought that in in taking a wife from among us you were imperilling your dignity--

Can anyone imagine things in a more inverted and humorous way? The languid, haughty Lady Mary fears that "Gov's" dignity will be impaired by marrying her.

Surely Barrie has left nothing unturned to convince us of the complete change the characters have undergone. They have been completely turned inside out and upside down right before our eyes. We have seen affected greatness crumble before real strength, and because of the humorous way in which it was done we enjoyed it.

Now Barrie inverts his process. He returns the characters to their nature sphere. The cast-a-ways are rescued and returned to their England homes. At once the change takes place. Ernest is gloating over the success of a book which he has written upon the adventure on the island.

Catherine. (reading) From the first to the last of Mr. Woolley's engrossing pages it is evident that he was an ideal man to be wrecked with, a true hero! (Half admiringly) Ernest!

Ernest. (calmly) That's how it strikes them you know. Here's another one.

Agatha. (reading) "There are many kindly references to the two servants who were wrecked with the family, and Mr. Woolley pays the butler a glowing tribute in a footnote."

The humor of this situation must be apparent to one who has read the first part of the story. Poor "Gov"



(suddenly anxious) If I thought that in taking a wife from among us you were insulting your dignity--

Can anyone imagine things in a more inverted and humorous way? The inverted, naughty Lady Mary feels that "Gaby's" dignity will be impaired by marrying her. Emily Barlow has felt nothing returned to convince her of the complete change the characters have undergone. They have been completely turned inside out and upside down right before our eyes. We have seen affected pretenses crumble before real strength, and because of the humorous way in which it was done we enjoyed it. Now Barlow invents his process. He returns the characters to their native spheres. The anti-a-ways are rescued and returned to their original homes. At once the change takes place. Present is Alighting over the success of a book which he has written upon his adventure on the island.

Catherine. (proceeding) From the first to the last of Mr. Woolley's surprising paper it is evident that he was an ideal man to be associated with a true Harold's! Alighting- (singing) (singing) What's how it strikes then you know. Barlow's another one. (singing) "There are many kindly references to the two servants who were wrecked with the family, and Mr. Woolley says the father a flowing tribute in a footnote." The humor of this situation must be apparent to one who has read the first part of the story. "Gaby"

mentioned in a footnote. Could anything be more unbelievable! As if to give us a chance to see him in his new gown as head of the house Lord Loam speaks up.

Lord Loam. (who has been searching the index for the letter L) Excellent, excellent! At the same time I must say, Ernest, the whole book is about yourself.

Ernest. (genially) As the author--

Lord Loam. Certainly, certainly. Still you know as the peer of the realm--(with dignity)-- I think, Ernest, you might have given me one of your adventures.

What has happened to Lord Loam's doctrine of equality? Evidently he has forsaken it for one which is more to his liking. There is one, however, who causes Lord Loam and Ernest to talk in quiet tones about their bravado. It is the quiet, unassuming Crichton. His conventional entrances quiet the voices of the two would-be braggadacio's, and it is only his attitude of reserve that keeps this scene from becoming farcical. All through this scene laughter ripples in the sighs of Crichton, in the blunders of Tweeny, in the timid boastfulness of Lord Loam and Ernest, in the insipidity of the restored "young things of aristocracy." At the end, however, Barrie inserts into the humor a note of wistfulness. Crichton gives up his claim to Lady Mary not as a butler renouncing some one far above his level but as a man surrendering a woman. This awakening of our sympathy for the mistreated Crichton is, however,



mentioned in a footnote. Could anything be more un-  
 desirable as to give me a chance to see him in his  
 new gown as head of the house? I am speaking up.

Some time. I was not been searching the paper for  
 the letter (I suspect, excellent, excellent!)  
 at the same time I must say, I must say, I must say,  
 the whole book is about yourself.  
 (Sincerely) as the author--  
 Certainly, certainly. Still you know so  
 the rest of the realm--(rich thing)--  
 I think, I think, you might have given  
 me one of your adventures.

What has happened to Lord Jones's doctrine of equal-  
 ity? Evidently he has forgotten it for one which is more  
 to his liking. There is one, however, who causes Lord  
 Jones and must to talk in other tones about their  
 doctrine. It is the quiet, unassuming Critchton. His  
 conventional and more quiet the voices of the two  
 would-be propagandists, and it is only his attitude of  
 reserve that keeps this scene from becoming farcical.  
 All through this scene laughter ripples in the air  
 of Critchton, in the blunders of "weary, in the midst  
 of the foolishness of Lord Jones and himself, in the instability  
 of the restored "young thing of aristocracy." At the  
 end, however, he is drawn into the human scene at  
 what point. Critchton gives up his claim to lady Mary  
 not as a better reasoning scene one far above his level  
 but as a man outwitting a woman. This awakening of  
 our sympathy for the distressed Critchton is, however,

typical of Barrie. Into every batch of humor that he mixes up he pours a goodly amount of wistfulness or pathos. This is what really gives the humor that lasting, palatable flavor. It gives it a tone of restraint; it makes it meditative, mirth-provoking fun rather than rollicking comedy. The fundamental situation in Admirable Crichton was indeed humorous--so humorous in fact, that in the hands of another less artistic author it might have become mere farce. Barrie made it furnish "plenty of quiet amusement and no little feeling of what the theater can and should be."\*

When we think of a comedy of manners we think almost simultaneously of one of its greatest if not the greatest exponent, Moliere. He is an undisputed master in the art of stripping folly piece by piece to its very core and of exposing it to public ridicule. To do this he employs the Comic muse. "He is the lord of laughter, from the smile which shows itself only in the eyes to the convulsive merriment which shakes the sides."\*\* It is difficult to decide in which of his plays he has reached the highest sphere of comedy. It seems to me, however, that he is decidedly at his best in Le Misanthrope and Les Femmes Savantes, and if a choice must be made between the two then I believe Les

\*The Commonweal 13:581 March 25, '31

\*\*Tilley Molière



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 tion in Alcibiades is a good humorous one--  
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 artistic author it might have become mere farce.  
 There is in it much "plenty of quiet amusement"  
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When we think of a comedy of manners we think of  
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 must be made between the two then I believe Les

Femmes Savantes rates highest as a comedy of manners and of character. Barrie, too, we have previously remarked, has employed this form. Would a comparison of the two be literary blasphemy? Although I am not going to say that Barrie attains the success which Molière has in the comedy of manners, I do not think that they are in such hopelessly distant ranks that they can not be brought together on some common ground.

Speaking generally, they both satirize human foibles. Barrie in The Admirable Crichton derides the aristocracy of England, Molière laughs at the "préciosité" of some French women in his Les Femmes Savantes. The attitude which they take toward their characters differs, I think Barrie regards his characters sympathetically yet humorously. Molière treats his derisively and yet with a humor which could not be mistaken for contempt. Barrie steps in occasionally to take the part of his characters while Molière lets them find their way out of difficulties by themselves. There is another point in which these writers differ. In fact, it is in this difference that all their dissimilarities might be contained. Barrie is timid and shy; Molière is bold and daring. Barrie states a contention, goes half way with it and then withdraws. He leads us at it were around in circles. Molière makes his conviction





clear at the beginning and follows it through relentlessly until no doubt remains in our minds as to what he wants us to think. There is no need to scorn one method for the other; either might well be defended. We can, of course, have our preference. In the creation of characters, I think Barrie and Molière come closer together. Both authors very cleverly intermingle good and evil in their characters. We never despise their heroes or heroines. We laugh heartily at their folly but we never scorn them for it.

These similarities and differences may be better realized if we examine to some small extent the text of the plays. Earlier in the thesis we have given a brief summary of The Admirable Crichton and so now we shall outline very briefly the plot of Les Femmes Savantes. The poet gives us a very vivid picture of social and intellectual climbers of his own time in the characters of Armand, Philominte and Belise. Armand and Philaminte, mother and daughter, are enamoured with the verses of Trissotin, "le bel esprit." Henriette, the other daughter, represents common sense. Clitandre is another opposing force to these would-be "savantes." Belise, the aunt who thinks every man within reach falls victims to her charm but is too modest and respectful to express his violent emotion,



clear at the beginning and follows it through to the  
last with no great result in our minds as to what  
the result is to be. There is no need to say any  
more for the future; what might be desired.  
We can, of course, have our preferences. In the question  
of literature, I think that the writers come closer  
together. Even authors very clearly distinguish their  
and still in their characters. We never forget their  
heroes or heroines. We laugh heartily at their folly  
but we never scorn them for it.

These characters and characters may be better  
realized if we attempt to some small extent the part  
of the play. Realism in the theatre we have given a  
very summary of the scientific fiction and no more  
we shall continue very briefly the plot of the novel  
novel. The plot gives us a very vivid picture of  
social and intellectual conditions of the time in  
the characters of the novel, the characters and the  
characters and incidents, father and daughter, the en-  
counter with the series of incidents, "the novel"  
the other daughter, the other daughter, the other daughter.  
Literature is another opening door to these worlds  
"novels". Well, the man who thinks that way  
within reach tells stories to his child but is too  
modest and respectful to express his violent emotion.

comes very close, indeed, to being a farcical character. Her wit and cleverness, evinced at rare intervals, just saves her. Chrysale is the typical subordinated (which is a kind term for henpecked) husband. Ariste, his brother, encourages him to assert himself although he is none too brave when called upon to confront the arrogance of the "learned" Philaminte. The plot is very simple, Philaminte, Armande and Belise pursue learning with all the refined energy they can muster. Their idea of intelligence is personified in Trissotin, the poet, and Vadius, the Greek scholar. Their happiness is about complete when plans are begun for the marriage of Henriette and Trissotin. Their ideals and hopes and aspirations and everything else they held as dear are completely shattered when Trissotine is discovered to be a better fortune-seeker than he is poet. In the last act we have the conquest of common sense over prudity and pedantry. Clitandre and Henriette are to be married; Chrysale asserts his authority; Armande though unsuccessful in love still has her philosophy.

There are some scenes in this play which I think are unequalled in their ability to satirize. One of these is the scene which centers upon Martine's dismissal for violating the laws of grammar. Here I think is exhibited an excellent portrayal of character



comes very close, indeed, to being a (logical) character-  
 istic. Her wit and cleverness, evinced at rare intervals,  
 just saves her. Chrysis is the typical subordinate  
 (which is a kind term for begotten) husband. His wife,  
 his mother, encourages him to assert himself although  
 he is none too brave when called upon to confront the  
 arrogance of the "ladies" (philosophers). The plot is  
 very simple, Eubulides, Democritus and Socrates pursue  
 learning with all the passion every man meets.  
 Their idea of intelligence is personified in the person  
 of the poet, and within the three scholars. Their learning  
 is about complete when there are signs for the marriage  
 of Eubulides and Socrates. Their ideas and hopes  
 and expectations and everything else they hold as dear  
 are completely shattered when Eubulides is discovered  
 to be a better fortune-seeker than he is poet. In  
 the last act we have the renouance of common sense over  
 vanity and vanity. Eubulides and Democritus are to  
 be married; Chrysis asserts his authority; Democritus  
 though unsuccessful in love still has his philosophy.  
 There are some scenes in this play which I think  
 are unequalled in their ability to satirize. One of  
 these is the scene which centers upon Socrates' dis-  
 missed for violating the laws of grammar. Here I think  
 is exhibited an excellent portrayal of character.

through a comedy upon the manners of the characters involved. Martine complains or rather tells Chrysale that she has been fired. He tries to discover the reason. Philaminte comes on the scene.

Phil. (apercevant Marie)--Quoi! je vous vois, maraude! Vite, sortez, fripponne; allons, quittez ces lieux, et ne vous presentez jamais devant mes yeux.

Chry. Tout doux.

Phil. Non, c'en est fait.

Chry. He--

Phil. Je veux qu'elle sorte

Chrys. Mais qu-a-t-elle commis pour vouloir de la sorte?

Phil. Quoi! vous la soutenez!

.....

Phil. Non, elle sortira, vous dis-je, de ceans.

.....

Chry. Est-ce qu'elle a laisse, d'un esprit negligent  
Derober quelque aiguere ou quelque plat d'argent?

Phil. Cela ne serait rien.

Chry. (a Martine) Oh! oh! Peste, la belle!

(a Philaminte) Quoi! l'avez-vous surprise a n'etre pas fidele?

Phil. C'est pis que tout cela!

Chry. Pis que tout cela?

Phil. Pis

Chry. (a Martine) Comment! diantre, fripponne!

(a Philaminte) Euh! a-t-elle-commis?.....

Phil. Elle a d'une insolence a nulle autre pareille  
Après trente leçons insulte mon oreille  
Par l'impropriete d'un mot sauvage et bas  
Ou 'eu termes decisifs condamne Vaugelas.

This is the height to which Philaminte's pedantry attains. She dismisses a servant because she has used a word which Vaugelas condemns. Keen and clever satire!





Good, clean and wholesome humor! There are other passages which approach this one, as the scene in which Trissotin reads his verses to his highly appreciative audience, Philaminte, Belise and Aramande, but there are none which quite attain its excellence. Through this scene we are enabled to see the characters better and understand them more thoroughly than we usually can after reading the entire play of another author.

Can The Admirable Crichton approach the high quality of comedy found in Les Femmes Savantes? As we have said before Barrie was not an unworthy pupil in the school of Moliere. I do not think, however, that Barrie attained that rollicking, side-splitting type of humor that we find in the scene from Les Femmes Savantes which we have quoted. It was not because Barrie was not capable of it, but rather because it was not in keeping with his own nature and disposition. Barrie does not laugh uproariously himself and he can not induce his readers or audience to do so. He is of nature shy, timid and reserved, and this same attitude permeates his work. Barrie suggests powerfully but subtly whereas Moliere leaves little to the imagination of his audience. He tells us plainly what he means, and we can laugh or be offended--it



Good, clear and wholesome memory! There are other  
persons to which approach this one, as the sense in  
which Aristotle treats his verses to his highly spe-  
cialized audience, Greek, Latin, Celtic and Armenian,  
but there are none which equal his excellence.  
Through this sense we are enabled to see the nature  
very better and understand them more thoroughly than  
we usually can after reading the entire story of another  
author.

Can the Aristotle tradition approach the high quality

of comedy found in the Plautus Terence? As we have  
said before, there was not an approach to it in the  
school of writers. I do not think, however, that  
Aristotle attained that perfection, side-by-side with  
of comedy that we find in the Plautus Terence  
Plautus and Terence were not equal. It was not because  
comedy was not popular in his time, but rather because it  
was not in keeping with his own nature and disposition.  
Aristotle does not laugh spontaneously himself and he can  
not induce his readers or audience to do so. He is  
of nature shy, timid and reserved, and this sense  
of shyness prevented his work. For his audience power-  
fully but subtly whereas others leaves little to  
the imagination of his audience. He tells us plainly  
what he means, and we can find in it of a clear-

matters little to Moliere. In The Admirable Crichton it is Lord Loam and his daughters and a very foolish young man who are the targets at which Barrie shoots his satirically tipped arrows. Perhaps the scene which best brings out this satire accompanied with a laugh here and there, one part of which we have quoted earlier,\* occurs very early in the play when Lord Loam is exerting himself to be democratic. Lord Loam makes a speech the success of which we doubted from the beginning. Our doubt was definitely confirmed before the speech was well along. He was caught in the thralls of a proverb which simply would not and could not be recalled. He began well enough but ended disastrously. This speech, in which democracy was praised to the limit, sounds very valiant, and if we were in the audience and the equality of mankind was one of our pet theories, we might be inclined to clap. The real humor and satire of this scene comes upon us only when we see the return to nature which takes place in the next act. The barriers of society are swept away. Let us find this man who craved "nature and equality." Lady Mary has become displeased with Crichton and orders him to go--to another part of the island she adds upon second thought.

Crichton. You need me so sorely; I can't desert you; I won't.



matters little to follow. In the Admiral's Exhibition  
 it is hard to see his intentions and a very foolish  
 young man who are the targets of which I have spoken  
 his satirical lighted eyes. Perhaps the same which  
 best things and this satire accompanied with a large  
 here and there, one part of which we have passed  
 earlier, we cannot very easily in the first part of the  
 in explaining himself to be democratic. I have been making  
 a speech the success of which we doubted from the  
 beginning. Our doubt was definitely confirmed before  
 the speech was well along. He was caught in the trap  
 of a proverb which simply would not and could not be  
 recalled. He was well enough to catch himself.  
 This speech, in which democracy was praised to the  
 limit, sounds very quaint, and as we were in the  
 audience and the quality of mankind was one of our  
 got theories, we might be inclined to say. The real  
 human and better of this scene comes upon us only when  
 we see the return to nature which takes place in the  
 next act. The picture of society are swept away. Let  
 us find this man who craved "nature and equality."  
 Lady Mary has become disgusted with riches and  
 orders him to go--to another part of the island and  
 abide upon second thoughts.  
 Crispin. You need me so sorely; I don't desert  
 you; I won't.

Lady Mary. (in alarm, lest the others may yield).  
Then, father, there is but one alternative,  
we must leave him.

(Lord Loam. is looking yearningly at Crichton)

Treherne. It seems a pity.

Catherine. (forlornly) You will work for us?

Treherne. Most willingly. But I must warn you,  
Crichton has done nine-tenths of the scor-  
ing.

Lady Mary. The question is, are we to leave this  
man?

Crichton. My lord!

Lord Loam. Treherne-Ernest, get our things.

Ernest. We don't have any, uncle. They all  
belong to Crichton.

Treherne. Everything we have he brought from the  
wreck--he went back to it before it sank.  
He risked his life.

Crichton. My lord, anything you would care to take  
is yours.

Lady Mary. Come, father we are ready. (followed by  
the others, she and Lord Loam pick their  
way up the rocks. In their indignation  
they scarcely notice that daylight is  
coming to a sudden end.

Crichton. My lord, I implore you--I am not desirous  
of being head. Do you have a try at it,  
my lord.

Lord Loam. (outraged) A try at it!?

Crichton. It may be that you will prove to be the  
best man.

Lord Loam. May be! My children.

All class distinction should be swept away, Lord  
Loam had said, and now he had his heart's desire and  
he discovered it was no longer a cherished wish. The  
great Lord Loam dependent upon his servant for the  
necessities of life! How ludicrous when we compare this  
man with the Lord Loam of the first act. This is  
democracy in its most literal sense. The reader may  
judge whether or not Lord Loam still believed his  
doctrine workable. In Act three the satire is intensi-





fied when we find Lord Loam so subjected to the imperturbable Crichton.

Lord Loam. I thought the Gov. was out.  
 Tweeney. Well, you see he ain't. And if he were  
 to catch you idling--  
 (Lord Loam pales. He lays aside his  
 musical instrument and hurriedly dons  
 an apron).

The humor of the situation is undeniable. The great Lord Loam pales--he dons an apron. Barrie has completed his effort to make things topsy-turvy and with this he has completed a pointed satirical thrust at the aristocracy of England who cry for democracy. It has not the frankness and directness of Molière's satire and comedy but it is there nevertheless.

Barrie is not Molière. The names are not interchangeable. In Barrie, however, there is much that is worthy of Molière; much that equals Molière. They do not work with the same tools but they often arrive at the same goal. Barrie uses a carefully padded satire so that no one will hurt himself when he bumps against it. His humor is subtle; it is deeply imbedded and it oftentimes might escape us if we were not watching for it. Molière signposts his satire. We could not miss it if we tried. His humor is also pushed to the foreground. It makes us laugh aloud and it never eludes us. The effect that is felt after one reads a play



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by Moliere and one by Barrie is very much the same. After the noise and the laughter of a Moliere play have waned and we think more clearly about it we are very likely to see in it a resemblance more or less striking to one of Barrie's.

There are two more plays in which we find definite traces of Barrie's satire. The first is Little Minister. This was first written by Barrie in novel form but later in answer to an incessant demand he arranged it for stage production. With Maude Adams as "Lady Babbie" it was a tremendous success and gave Barrie an undisputed place among contemporary dramatists. Recently it has been adapted to the screen and Katherine Hepburn, one of the greatest character actresses of our time, played "Lady Babbie."

It is considered by some to be so thoroughly sentimental that it lacks both humor and satire. Patrick Braybrook, who seems to speak with an authority that one might hesitate to dispute, says: "There are critics who have considered that this book and the dramatized story from it, are satires. I do not think such a criticism is true."\* I have read Little Minister through twice with the purpose in mind of converting myself to Mr. Braybrooke's belief. It has not been a successful undertaking, however, for I still believe



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There are two more plays in which we find definite  
 traces of Harris's satire. The first is Little Minister.  
 This was first written by Harris in novel form and later  
 in answer to an innocent demand he suggested it for  
 stage production. With words added as "Lady Babbalanza"  
 it was a tremendous success and gave Harris an undis-  
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 through twice with the purpose in mind of converting  
 myself to Mr. Gregor's belief. It has not been a  
 successful undertaking, however, for I still believe

that there is satire in the play. Furthermore, it appears to me to be typically "Barrie satire." It is very gentle--it might even be called fragile. It is the satire of a sane man looking with an unprejudiced eye upon the people whom he loved but whose weaknesses he was not blind to. Generally speaking, the satire was directed against the prudishness of his "ain folk." They had singular ideas about their minister. He was supposed to be made of "sterner stuff" than were other men and should therefore be able to resist the temptations of the world with much greater success. He respected these views but could not hold them himself and smiled with a tender, understanding smile upon those who did. The "auld licht elders" who censure Gavin Dishart, the likeable Little Minister for becoming entangled with a Gypsy girl, present a humorous picture as they enter Gavin's house to enquire why he had neglected his duties at the "kirk." So sedate, so austere, so thoroughly religious and yet underneath all this exterior rigidity so very human, they fall victims to Babbie's charm. Did not Barrie smile at all this? I think so and further more I think he wanted us to smile respectfully too. I do not think Gavin Dishart is satirized because Barrie seemed to like him too well. This is also true of Babbie. He does, however, allow





us to laugh occasionally at them. Do you remember the occasion upon which Babbie can not talk because she has her "best alpaca on?" Then there is also the occasion upon which Babbie through a clever piece of stratagem, little minx that she is, gets Gavin to blow the horn which caused an uprising to which he was bitterly opposed. Wholesome comedy of character and delicate sane satire with the freshness and cleanliness of a gentle breeze blowing through a hot valley is undeniably to be found here.

Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire is the third play which might be said to satirize. "It satirizes modern social drama with its perpetual triangulation of husband, wife, and lover by the clever expedient of showing it up as it appears from the point of view of a girl in her teens, who knows nothing of life except what she has gathered from the realistic representations of it in the theater.\* To fully comprehend the significance of this quotation we should have to know something of the story. The Colonel, who is the father of our little family, and Alice, who is the much bewildered mother, return from a long stay in India only to find that their children, Amy and Cosmo, are little less than strangers to them. The father is most successful in his efforts



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to remove the terrible tenseness which exists. Alice seems to lose ground rather than to gain any. Amy, the would-be sophisticate, has seen a great many of the latest plays and when she observes that her mother is quite friendly with an acquaintance of the family, a certain Steve, she begins to draw her own conclusions. "The main comedy," says Phelps, "revolves about the daughter, who believes it is her mission to destroy her mother's clandestine romance."\* She takes it upon herself to visit Steve's apartment in an effort to obtain from him the letters her Mother must have written him. She was sure there had to be letters, for the meanest little romance on the stage always had the complication of at least a "billet-doux" or two. The mother, father, Amy and all meet in Steve's apartment. None of them know what the other one is talking about. Amy is the only one who feels that she has grasped the situation and she is, in reality the most deluded of all. After much comedy of dialogue and situation the true state of affairs dawns upon the older persons and the necessary adjustments are made. Even to the end, Amy firmly believes that she has saved her mother from a terrible fate.

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The general satire, as we have said, is directed against the stage of the time. Alice had been frequent-



ing the theater and it was there that she had been infected with the romantic ideas which brought on the complication in the story. Her companion, on these escapades to the newest and most "touching" plays, was Ginevra, who has also been moved to another sphere because of the vast amount of new information she had gleaned by seeing what life really is. Barrie has made the unfolding of this idea very humorous, and yet he has not allowed the comedy and situation to obliterate the intended satire. Amy and Ginevra are discussing the vast change in their attitude toward life.

Amy. Another theater? Ginevra, that would be five in one week.

Ginevra. (without blanching). Yes, but it is only eight in seventeen years.

Amy. (comforted) And they have taught us so much, haven't they? Until Monday, dear, when we went to our first play we did not know what Life is.

Ginevra. We were two raw, unbleached school-girls, Amy absolutely unbleached. (It is such a phrase as this that gives Ginevra the moral ascendancy in their discussions.)

Amy. (looking perhaps a little unbleached even now) of course I had my diary, dear, and I do think that, even before Monday, there were things in it of a not wholly ordinary kind.

Ginevra. Nothing that necessitated your keeping it locked.

Amy. No, I suppose not. You are quite right, Ginevra. But we have made up for lost time. Every night since Monday, including the matinee, has been a revelation.

Ginevra. Amy, that heart gripping scene when the love-maddened woman visited the man in his chambers.



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Ginevra. Amy, that heart-expanding scene when the love-maddened woman visited the man in his chamber.

Amy. She wasn't absolutely love-maddened, Ginevra; she really loved her husband best all the time.

Ginevra. Not till the last act, darling.

Amy. Please don't say it, Ginevra. She was most foolish, especially in the crepe de chine, but we know that she only went to the man's chambers to get back her letters. How I trembled for her then.

In these few speeches we have the motivation behind all that Amy did throughout the remainder of the play. Her mother became for her the poor misled heroine, while Steve, poor innocent Steve, was the vile seducer who would stop at nothing, not even the wrecking of a home, to accomplish his villainous purpose. The remainder of the play shows Amy putting her newly acquired theories to work. She is such a true heroine that she even attempts to save the situation by proclaiming:

Amy. He is my affianced husband.

All throughout this scene Barrie seems to be asking us if we realize now the extent to which people can be affected by the stage and if that stage gives only foolish, nonsensical, highly romantic love stories how devastating its influence can be.

Some are of the opinion that this comedy evolves into farce and I do not think this idea is entirely lacking in justification. I am inclined, however, to take sides with Professor Phelps, who says that it was "saved from cheapness by its revelations of human nature and by its tenderness."\*



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Again Phelps says, that "Not only is every individual character laughed at but boyhood, girlhood, youth, manhood, and womanhood are all enveloped in a sea of mirth."\* This is very true I think. There is much laughter and it is a more boisterous laughter than most of Barrie's comedies would evoke. There is, however, something more than laughter. In it we see a mother, a father, a son and a daughter not only laughingly bewildered but pitifully deluded. We see a mother fighting for the estranged love of her children; we see a little girl whose head is so filled with romantic notions that she is living a terribly artificial life. Throughout the play, as Phelps has suggested, there is a development, an exposition of character and there is a filial tenderness which refuses to stoop to farce. Not only do these qualities keep the play from farce but they give it an element that makes it purposeful, that raises it from the level of pure comedy to the height of gentle, delicate and very sane satire.

How very different is the satire of Barrie from that of George Bernard Shaw! They are as far apart as two satirists could be. Shaw intends to permeate the world with his doctrines. He knows he is right, because, of course, Shaw is always correct in Shaw's estimation, and he does not hesitate to say so. Barrie



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is less confident of his own ability to analyse the ills of the world and to prescribe for them. His is rather the attitude of one who makes a general criticism and then says very meekly "if the cap fits you, wear it." It is evident that Shaw must be the more widely known of the two because he forces his ideas on people, while Barrie suggests and leaves us to apply the lesson to ourselves. Few are inclined to such self-disparagement and as a result much of Barrie's satire passes as purposeless but highly amusing comedy. Barrie attacks weaknesses and follies; Shaw trifles in his plays with little less than national social problems, vices, crimes. Nothing is too great or too awful for the Shavian mind to comprehend, analyse and prescribe for. Nothing is too sacred for him to handle, nothing too delicate for his gross pen. His definition of literature must be very inclusive, (that is if he considers his plays literature and I do not think it would be safe to suggest in his presence, at least, that they were not) for he embraces so many and such varied subjects. He takes upon himself the task of rejecting the traditional, of supplying a natural reason for a supernatural effect. In his prefact to Saint Joan he says: "The combination of inept youth and academic ignorance with great natural capacity, push, courage, devotion, originality



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and oddity, fully accounts for all the facts in Joan's career."\* Shaw has spoken, there is no longer any question to be raised. He has decided it for the world. Mrs. Warren's Profession is another satire-- but this a modern one upon a modern economic difficulty. "I have shown," says Shaw, "That Mrs. Warren's Profession is an economic phenomenon produced by our underpayment and ill-treatment of women who try to earn an honest living."\*\* To accomplish his satire Shaw dips his pen into degenerated passion, into disgusting vice, and the pages he produces are so besmeared by filth and immorality that the reader becomes too bewildered to follow the satire.

How different Barrie and how pleasantly different! In The Admirable Crichton English aristocracy is derided; in Little Minister Barrie smiles at the "auld licht elders"; in Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire, the faults of the stage of the time were held up to view. I believe, however, that we would leave the theater after each of these performances with a light heart and a cheery word for our neighbor. We would have seen Barrie's satire but it would have been so intermingled with comedy that we would have enjoyed it. After attending either of the performances of Shaw that I have mentioned, or even after reading them, we should feel like washing

\*G. B. Shaw Preface to Saint Joan

\*\*G. B. Shaw Preface to Getting Married



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our hands. Satire is bad medicine to take anyway, but if it is mixed with orange juice as in Barrie then it is not so hard to swallow. Shaw gives us the unadulterated, bad tasting medicine; and it is sometimes, most times, I should say, extremely disgusting.

### C. Barrie's Humorous Characters

Barrie is a genius at portraying humorous characters and here I use the word humorous in its truest significance, that is when "it is joined inevitably to pathos and deep feeling."\* "The fountain of tears and laughter lie close together and the truest humor is often mingled with pathos."\*\* We always feel a little sorry for Barrie's characters, but we are never so conquered by this emotion that we fail to see their funny-side. When the plot of one of the plays may be forgotten there will be left with us the memory of a character, or several characters who won a place in our heart because we laughed with them and occasionally at them, but we loved them and sympathised with them. Richard Le Gallienne says: "Barrie's strong point is genuine, lovable, humorous character."\*\*\* This is, I think, quite true, although Barrie's genius is composed of so many phases of dramatic ability that it is difficult to give any one precedence over another.

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think Barrie has been most successful. They would add comedy to any situation. The characters to which I refer are his butlers and his would-not-be "old maids." They are the best exponents of Barrie's inimitable mingling of comedy and satire, of laughter and tears.

Chief among the "butler" characters is, of course, our old friend Crichton. He has been so fully discussed that a few words will suffice to give a complete picture of him. He is the good servant. In fact he is more than a good servant, he is the perfect butler. And he is extremely proud of his position in society. Barrie conceives him in the following way.

"To be an indoor servant at all is to Crichton a badge of honor; to be a butler at thirty is the realization of his proudest ambitions. He is devotedly attached to his master, who in his opinion has but one fault, he is not sufficiently contemptuous of his inferiors."

Crichton displays a keen sense of the ridiculous at all times. Sometimes he displays this alertness of his mind by words as he did so often when they were on the tropical island. Class distinctions had been eradicated and Crichton embraced the opportunity to exercise his wit and humor. Several times he played upon the word "natural" which had been a by-word with the English Lord. In fact he becomes arrogant and bully-



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"To be an indoor servant at all is to Grichton a badge of honor; to be a butler at thirty is the realization of his proudest ambitions. He is devotedly attached to his master, who in his opinion has but one fault, he is not sufficiently contemptuous of his inferiors."

Grichton displays a keen sense of the ridiculous at all times. Sometimes he displays this alertness of his mind by words as he did so often when they were on the tropical island. Class distinctions had been eradicated and Grichton embraced the opportunity to exercise his wit and humor. Several times he played upon the word "natural" which had been a by-word with the English lord. In fact he becomes arrogant and belly-

ing to an amusing degree. They have brought it on themselves and he is relentless in impressing this fact upon their minds. But Crichton is so well portrayed by Barrie, he is so much a child of his genius that he is a very humorous character when he is silent or when he merely sighs. In the first act he does not criticise in words Ernest who is succeeding very well in making himself ridiculous.

Ernest. (becoming confidential, as we do when we have need of an ally) Crichton, in case I should be asked to say a few words to the servants, I have strung together a little speech. (His hand strays to his pocket.) I was wondering where I should stand.

Crichton very submissively hands him a foot-stool as only a Crichton could have handed it. That Crichton by this act well expressed what he was thinking is evident from the fact that Ernest kicked the stool across the room.

"Crichton is an insufferable snob. We can see him but coldly polite if we arrived at his door carrying a Gladstone bag, we can see him obsequious if we rolled up in our best car."\* This, is, indeed, Crichton. But his snobbery would rather make us admire him and smile at him. He would remind us of the English butler of today as he is portrayed on the screen by such an actor as Edward Everett Horton. Haughty to the last



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Ernest. (becoming confidential, as we do when we have need of an ally) Critchton, in case I should be asked to say a few words to the servants, I have struck together a little speech. (His hand always to his pocket.) I was wondering where I should stand.

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degree! Loyal to the same extent! We love them for it and yet we can not conceal a smile as we watch them perform their duties perfectly but almost automatically. Crichton is one of these but he had the advantage of being endowed with a good mind and the good fortune to be placed in a situation where he might use it.

Another of like profession is Matey, the butler in Dear Brutus. We are first introduced to him by Barrie himself. The guests who have been invited by Lob for a short stay at his home have just come into the room. Barrie in a stage direction says:

"Swiftly they find their seats, and are sunk thereon like ladies waiting languidly for their lords, when the doomed butler appears. He is a man of brawn who could cast any of them forth for a wager; but we are about to connive at the triumph of mind over matter. At once we see that here stands no perfect Crichton. In fact it is only in the similarity of his dress to Crichton's that we are at all reminded of the imperturbable, intelligent butler in the Loam household. Matey shows a definite lack of "gray matter;" he is unbelievably tactless and he is unforgivingly ungrammatical, and yet in spite of this he amuses us and we feel sorry for him. This is because Barrie created him and has along with all his faults allowed a redeeming characteristic or two to creep in. He, with Lady Caroline, gives us



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Barrie himself. The guests who have been invited by  
him for a short stay at his home have just come into  
the room. Barrie in a stage direction says:  
"Swiftly they find their seats, and as such that  
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a scene which, for sheer humor, is hard to beat. In the second chance which Barrie gives to his characters in Dear Brutus, he makes Matey and Lady Caroline husband and wife. It is particularly humorous if we recall that in the first act it is Lady Caroline who discovers that Matey has appropriated to himself some of the ladies' jewelry. But let us listen to Lady Caroline and Matey as husband and wife.

Lady Caroline. Is it not a lovely night, Jim? Listen, my own to Philomel; he is saying that he is lately married. So are we, you ducky thing. I feel, Jim, that I am Rosalind and that you are my Orlando.

Matey. What do you say I am, my Carolyn?

Lady Caroline. My own one, don't you think it would be fun if we were to write poems about each other and pin them on the tree trunks?

Matey. Poems, I never knew such a lass for high flown language.

Lady Caroline. Your lass, dearest. Jim's lass.

Matey. (pulling her ear) And don't you forget it.

Lady Caroline. What would you do if I were to forget it, great bear?

Matey. Take a stick to you.

Lady Caroline. I love to hear you talk like that; It is so virile. I always knew that it was a master, I needed.

A big, brawny butler and an arrogant, haughty English lady using such familiar and endearing terms! Through it we catch a glimpse of the very human heart that beats under Matey's stiff front shirt. In the first act we feel sorry for the plight he is in although we can not excuse him. In the second act we



a scene which, for sheer humor, is hard to beat. In the second scene which Barrie gives to his characters in Dear Brutus, he makes Macey and Lady Caroline husband and wife. It is particularly humorous if we recall that in the first act it is Lady Caroline who discovers that Macey has appropriated to himself some of the ladies' jewelry. But let us listen to Lady Caroline and Macey as husband and wife.

Lady Caroline. Is it not a lovely night, Jim? Listen, my own to Philomena; he is saying that he is lately married. So are we, you know. I feel, Jim, that I am Rossini and that you are my Orlando.

Macey. What do you say I am, my Caroline? My own one, don't you think it would be fun if we were to write poems about each other and give them on the tree trunk?

Lady Caroline. I never knew such a fuss for high flown language. Your lass, dearest, Jim's lass, (pulling her ear) And don't you forget it.

Macey. What would you do if I were to forget it, great beauty? Take a stick to you.

Lady Caroline. I love to hear you talk like that; it is so virile. I always knew that it was a matter, I needed.

A big, brawny butler and an arrogant, headstuck English lady using such familiar and endearing terms! Through it we catch a glimpse of the very human heart that beats under Macey's stiff front shirt. In the first act we feel sorry for the plight he is in although we can not excuse him. In the second act we

laugh at his attempts to be romantic. In the final act he is once more the perfunctory butler.

Dolphin is the butler in that one-act play, Shall We Join the Ladies? He has a rather insignificant role and yet we see enough of him to form an opinion about him. Barrie in the stage directions gives us a very definite notion of this man. He says:

"Dolphin, the butler is passing round the fruit; the only other attendant is a maid in the background, as for an emergency, and she is as interested in the conversation as he is indifferent to it. If one of the guests were to destroy himself, Dolphin would merely sign to her to remove the debris while he continued to serve the fruit."

Here we see much of the same imperturbability that was characteristic of Crichton, attentive to duty and equally inattentive to everything which is not in the line of duty. His very attitude would provoke mirth in any situation or circumstance. We have another view of him later when one of the ladies decides that there are thirteen at the table. This number, of course, has some unlucky significance and the ladies are openly disturbed. Miss Isit conceives the very horrible idea (horrible at least to Dolphin) that the butler should be seated. At first he is



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openly reluctant, but finally, with a sigh that would call to mind Crichton's long deep breaths, obliges. His health being drunk, however, he immediately withdraws from the table to stand once more in his proper place, at the side board. Dolphin does not say a word, so it is not his speech that gives <sup>him</sup> a place among Barrie's humorous characters. It is rather what he does and how he does it. We view him through Barrie's eyes, and no one could use such a medium of vision without seeing much that excites gentle laughter.

Among the most humorous of Barrie's character creations should be numbered several of his female characters. If a few must be selected, then those whom he has portrayed as unwilling old maids would surely be rated the highest. Maggie Wylie is, perhaps, the best known of these at the present time. This is due, no doubt, to the fact that the play in which she is a leading character, What Every Woman Knows, has recently been very successfully adapted to the screen. Helen Hayes very capably and intelligently interpreted Maggie Wylie. Poor, lovable Maggie Wylie! She is "a brave, plain, humorous"\* little Miss Nobody, who eventually becomes a very important but none the less brave, plain and humorous little Miss Somebody. Her great difficulty is that she is wholly without



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"Char-rum" that would attract and hold a suitor. Quiet, little Maggie who kept the house in order and sent the family to bed at ten o'clock every evening makes us smile but never openly because we are sorry for her. Her oddities of speech, her quaintness of dress, her simplicity of manner are truly mirth-provoking, but the goodness of her heart and the kindness of her nature makes us love her and want to help her. The humor of the situation in which Maggie finds herself is quite unusual. John Shand, a railway porter but a would-be scholar, makes his way to the Wylie home each evening, enters by the window, and makes use of their books. He is finally caught in the act and Maggie's brothers see a chance to save Maggie from the state of spinsterhood by bargaining with the young fellow. They will pay him three hundred pounds to be used for his education if he will, at the end of five years, marry Maggie should she still be single and want him.

John. (after a pause). I regret to say--  
 Maggie. It doesn't matter what he regrets to say, because I decide against it. And I think it was very ill done of you to make any such proposal.

David. (without looking at her) Quiet, Maggie.

John. (looking at her) I must say, Miss Maggie, I don't see what reasons you can have for being so set against it.

Maggie. If you would grow a beard, Mr. Shand, the reasons wouldn't be quite so obvious.

John. I'll never grow a beard.



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John. I'll never grow a beard.

Maggie. Seeing I have refused the young man--

Maggie shows a spirit and a subtle humor which are the result of her natural quaintness. Her remarks are quick, pert, and very much to the point. She is perfectly frank and does not seem to be skilled in the art of deceit which has come to be thought almost a natural trait of women.

As the second act opens we discover that six years have elapsed. John Shand has made much of the three hundred pounds, and now his great moment has come. He is awaiting the result of the election which would make him a Member of Parliament. Of course, John is successful and Maggie awaits his triumphal entrance into his committee rooms. She is still the same quaint little creature although she is dressed a little more fashionably than the last time we saw her. She is putting on a brave front, and it is just what we would expect of her. In this scene Maggie's innate and unconscious humor comes to the foreground several times but nowhere, perhaps, as well as in her conversation with Lady Sybil, with whom John later becomes infatuated.

Maggie. Mr. Shand will be down directly.  
Domtesse. Thank you. Your brother has been giving no such an interesting account of his career. I forget, Sybil, whether he said that he was married.  
Maggie. No, he's not married; but he will be



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Magpie. No, he's not married; but he will be

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Comtesse. Ah! A friend of yours?

Maggie. (now a scorner of herself) I don't think much of her.

Comtesse. In that case, tell me all about her.

Maggie. There's not much to tell. She's common, and stupid. One of those who go in for self-culture, and then when the test comes they break down. (with sinister enjoyment) She'll be the ruin of him.

Comtesse. But is not that sad! Figure to yourself how many men with greatness before them have been shipwrecked by marrying in the rank from which they sprang.

Maggie. I've told her that.

Comtesse. But she will not give him up?

Maggie. No.

Sybil. Why should she if she cares for him? What is her name?

Maggie. It's---Maggie.

Maggie shows an unusual amount of bravery in this scene which is so full of ironic humor and if there is such a phrase, pathetic humor. Maggie is sometimes "down" but she is never "out". She has a fine appreciation of the ridiculous and she can laugh even if it is at herself. John gets on very well and he gets on exceptionally well with Lady Sybil. The infatuation comes to the point where John feels that he must leave Maggie and go to the source of all his inspiration, the beautiful Lady Sybil. Maggie displays the same good common sense and arranges that the two lovers be in each other's company for two week's time. Her plan succeeds. They tire of each other and Maggie is a welcome sight to John when she goes up for a visit.



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They are reunited and everything promises to go along smoothly until John is made to realize that it has been Maggie's deft touches in his speeches that have warranted their success. These speeches give us an idea of the humor that Maggie had at hand and the very good use to which she could put it. The Comtesse and Venables, a political friend, are discussing the great qualities of John's second speech which, of course, was the result, in great part at least of Maggie's deft touches.

Comtesse. You always said that his second thoughts were best, Charles.

Venables. (pleased to be reminded of it) Didn't I, didn't I? Those delicious little touches! How good that is, Shand, about the flowing tide.

Comtesse. The flowing tide?

Venables. In the first speech it was something like this--"Gentlemen, the Opposition are calling to you to vote for them and the flowing tide, but I solemnly warn you to beware lest the flowing tide does not engulf you!" The second way is much better.

Comtesse. What is the second way, Mr. Shand?  
(John does not tell her)

Venables. This is how he puts it now. (John can not help raising his head to listen). "Gentlemen, the Opposition are calling to you to vote for them and the flowing tide, but I ask you cheerfully to vote for us and dam the flowing tide".

Maggie's humor put to a practical use had triumphed and it was to triumph once more. John Shand, the great (the r must be rolled) and the mighty, was humbled by the fact that his wife had



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mighty, was humbled by the fact that his wife had

played such an important part in his success. He was sullen.

Maggie. John, am I to go? or are you to keep me on? (She is now a little bundle near his feet) I'm willing to stay because I am useful to you, if it can't be for a better reason. (His hand feels for her, and the bundle wriggles nearer). It's nothing unusual I've done, John. Every man who is high up loves to think that he has done it all himself; and the wife smiles and lets it go at that. It's our only joke. Every woman knows that. (He stares at her in hopeless perplexity) Oh! John, if you could only laugh at me.

John. I can't laugh, Maggie.

Maggie. Laugh, John, laugh. Watch me, see how easy it is.

Finally after many fruitless contortions of his face John laughs. Maggie has conquered, through and because of her ability to smile in the face of disappointment and to laugh in the presence of danger. Elizabeth Cary must have had Maggie in mind when she wrote, "Barrie's heroines are braver than his heroes."\*

Phoebe Throssel, of Quality Street fame, is a romantic little soul. In fact she is a bit too romantic for her staid and extremely proper setting. She is the figure around which this apotheosis of maidenhood revolves. Phoebe with her curls and her genial smile wins the heart of every audience. She has about her, however, sufficient of the atmosphere of Quality Street to give her a poise and a quaintness that constitutes a true Barrie character. Miss Susan



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and she made this comedy, "in which the flavor is enriched by an exquisite relish for delicate values in human nature and an alluring dexterity in playing along the line over which the fantastic and the actual exchange their friendly greeting."\* It is Phoebe in particular that treads or rather dances along this line between fantasy and realism and makes the play humorous, sly, casual, genial and refined. It has a charm that is so delicate that it almost defies transcription from the mind to paper. The plot is not very complex. She imagines that she is loved by a certain Valentine Brown. The important announcement which she believes is to be a proposal of marriage turns out to be merely the news that he has enlisted. "She doesn't say much but enough for us to know once again how Barrie knows where the great moment of a woman's life doesn't come."\*\* She shows the same courage that all Barrie's women display when she explains to her friends who have the wedding arrangements practically made.

Phoebe. A misunderstanding; just a mistake.

The next time we see Phoebe she is ten years older and time has not been kind to her. She has aged and her curls are tucked up under her cap and last but not least important she is now an "old maid school

\*Athenaeum 2:424 Sept. 27 '02

\*\*Patrick Braybrooke Barrie Page 26



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teacher." What else need be said to prove that the propriety of "Quality Street had overtaken her? She is more quaint than ever. We find this preciseness in her treatment of the pupils. Can we imagine a teacher talking to boys and girls the way Phoebe did?

Phoebe. That will do, ladies and gentlemen, you may go.

Isabella. Please ma'am, father wishes me to acquire algebra.

Phoebe. (with a sinking) Algebra. It is not a very ladylike study, Isabella.

Isabella. Father says, will you or won't you?

Phoebe. And you are thin and it will make you thinner.

Isabella. Father says I am wiry.

Phoebe. Yes, you are. (with feeling) You are very wiry.

Finally timid Phoebe gives in and Isabella takes algebra--So it is--one difficulty after another and yet in all her difficulties she manages to maintain the ability to laugh at herself. When Mr. or rather Captain Brown returns Phoebe realizes that she has let herself slide too much. She casts off her school room attire puts on her best finery only to discover that Captain Brown was really in love with plain Phoebe and not with Miss Livvy who was Phoebe's dressed-up other self. The climax of Phoebe's quaintness and her unconscious humor is presented to us when she replies to Captain Brown's proposal of marriage.

Phoebe. Sir, the dictates of my heart enjoin me to accept your too flattering offer.



teacher." What else need be said to prove that the propriety of "Quality Street" had overtaken her? She is more quaint than ever. We find this preciousness in her treatment of the pupils. Can we imagine a teacher talking to boys and girls the way Phoebe did?

Phoebe. That will do, ladies and gentlemen, you may go.  
 Isabella. Please me, am, father wishes me to acquire algebra.  
 Phoebe. (With a shudder) Algebra. It is not a very ladylike study, Isabella.  
 Isabella. Father says, will you or won't you?  
 Phoebe. And you are thin and it will make you thinner.  
 Isabella. Father says I am wiry.  
 Phoebe. Yes, you are. (With feeling) You are very wiry.

Finally timid Phoebe gives in and Isabella takes algebra--So it is--one difficulty after another and yet in all her difficulties she manages to maintain the ability to laugh at herself. When Mr. or rather Captain Brown returns Phoebe realizes that she has let herself slide too much. She casts off her school room attire puts on her best linen only to discover that Captain Brown was really in love with plain Phoebe and not with Miss Livvy who was Phoebe's dressed-up other self. The climax of Phoebe's quaintness and her unconscious humor is presented to us when she replies to Captain Brown's proposal of marriage.

Phoebe. Sir, the distaste of my heart enjoin me to accept your too flattering offer.

We are glad, delighted, in fact, that Phoebe has succeeded in capturing the one whom she has loved silently for so many years, but we have to smile at her unusualness. It is just what we would have expected her to say but not another person in the world would have made a like reply. Throughout the entire play there are deft touches of Barrie's humor. There is the subtle observation by Miss Susan that some men make love merely because they are deficient in conversation. In the same vein of rich, thoughtful comedy she remarks that much conjugal unhappiness grows from the inability of men to understand how funny ladies can be and that woman have feelings, as well as men, and old maids as well as women.

"Mrs." Dowey is another character whom Barrie has created using as the chief ingredients humor, pathos and sentiment. She is a lovable old lady, and in the early part of the play is uproariously funny. Pathos and sentiment temper this comedy as the story evolves, and finally they succeed in almost (mark that I say almost) eclipsing it. In the play we have three old ladies and a criminal. The criminal, "Mrs." Dowey, has committed the awful crime of pretending she has a son at the front, so that she can write letters to somebody, that she can dread the sound of the tele-



55

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has committed the awful crime of pretending she has  
a son at the front, so that she can write letters to  
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graphs boy's knock. The other old ladies, all char-ladies, merely make up the setting, for let it be known our criminal is a charwoman. It so happens that "Mrs." Dowey's pretended son comes on leave and decides to visit his "mother." This he does and is at first inclined to be somewhat annoyed to find that he has been the victim of a ruse. But, by the end of Private Dowey's leave, all is made up and the gallant Highlander is content that "Mrs." Dowey shall be his new found "mother".\* In spite of her crime "Mrs." Dowey is a delightful character. She is real and pleasingly humorous. She takes much pleasure in talking about her adopted son to the neighbors who drop in for tea.

"Mrs." Dowey. (the criminal). Kenneth writes to me every week. (There are exclamations. The dauntless old thing holds aloft a packet of letters) Look at this. All his. (Haggerty woman frowns).

Mrs. Twymley. Alfred has little time for writing, being a bombardier.

"Mrs." Dowey. simply will not be outdone.

"Mrs." Dowey. (relentlessly). Do your letters begin 'Dear Mother'?

Mrs. Twymley. Generally.

Mrs. Micklesham. Invariable.

The Haggerty woman. Everytime.

"Mrs." Dowey. (delivering the knock out blow)  
Kenneth's begin 'Dearest Mother'.  
(No one can think of the right reply).

It is no wonder that they are all stunned and unable to come back with an answer for "Mrs." Dowey is



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being a bombardier.  
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"Mrs." Powey. (reluctantly). Do your letters begin  
'Dear Mother'?

Mrs. Twynley. Generally.  
Mrs. Michelson. Invariably.  
The Haggerty woman. Everytime.  
"Mrs." Powey. (delivering the knock out blow).  
Kenneth's begin 'Dearest Mother'.  
(No one can think of the right reply).

It is no wonder that they are all stunned and un-  
able to come back with an answer for "Mrs." Powey is



hardened in her crime.

Then in comes the six-feet-two inch adopted son terribly provoked at the hoax. We think "Mrs." Dowey is overwhelmed, but she recovers and holds her ground well.

Dowey. I tell you I came here for the one purpose of blazing away at you. (It is such a roaring negative that it blows her into a chair. But she is up again in a moment, is this spirited old lady).  
 "Mrs" Dowey. You could drink some tea while you was blazing away. There's winkles.

In the end her persistency coupled with her motherly nature and her good humor win him over. Her actions to win the approval of her new son are very funny. She dresses as she thinks he would like her to; she tries to adopt his parlance and religiously she avoids the use of the word son lest it might offend him. The climax of the story and perhaps the most mirth-provoking scene occurs when Kenneth proposes to "Mrs." Dowey and she formally accepts him as her son. There is a deep vein of pathos, but it does not destroy the humor of the situation. It only makes it rich and purer. Patrick Braybrooke pays real tribute to "Mrs." Dowey when he says:

"It is really unfortunate that this is a war play, for we could always do with "Mrs." Dowey on our English stage, she is so infinitely superior to the creations of today. Why must we sit and watch pseudo-actresses



Unhappy in his life.

This is a story of a man who has been through a great deal of trouble and who is now in a state of mind that is not very happy.

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vacillate between being mannequins and the mistresses of cads, why need we watch women who are merely vampires and men who are merely masculine fops? We would rather watch "Mrs." Dowey, we would rather see her and her pail. For it is possible that of all the Barrie characters, the war charlady, is most likely to make us realize, what woman really is, and how hopelessly unwomanlike are those who are born of many modern playwrights."\*

#### D. Humor in Fantasy.

There is a particular type of humor which has come to be thought almost interchangeable with the name, Barrie. It is the humor which he expresses through fantasy. He takes the unusual and makes it seem as plausible as an every day happening. So deftly does he intermingle the world of reality with fancy that we can scarce draw the line where one ends and the other begins. His fantasy is daring; it is extraordinary and yet we never scoff at it. This is primarily because, in the hands of one who in such a master of it, we fall unconscious and willing victims to it. The situations which he creates through his fancifulness abound with a light, genial and surprising love of fun. We are carried by Barrie from the land of reality to the land of fancy, where there is an atmosphere of joviality. Everyone has cast off the



vacillate between being masculine and the mistress  
 of each, why need we watch women who are merely masculine  
 and men who are merely masculine? We would rather  
 watch "Mrs. Dorey, we would rather see her and her  
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 D. Hunter is fantasy.

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 to be thought almost interchangeable with the name,  
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 fantasy. He takes the unusual and makes it seem as  
 possible as an every day happening. So deeply does  
 he understand the world of reality with fancy that he  
 can choose from the line where one ends and the other  
 begins. His fantasy is constant; it is extraordinarily  
 and yet we never cease to find it. This is primarily  
 because, in the hands of one who in such a master of  
 it, we feel unconscious and willing victims to it.  
 The situations which he creates through his fantasy  
 abound with a light, genial and surprising love of  
 fun. He is carried by fancy from the land of reality  
 to the land of fancy, where there is an atmosphere  
 of joyfulness. Everyone has cast off the

shackles of earthly worries and has become as carefree children in Barrie's fantasy; and this is particularly true of that delightful drama, Peter Pan. It is above everything else a fairy tale which deals with mortals as well as fairies. This play, which has become almost symbolic with Christmas, has as its theme, the eternity of youth. "I'm youth, eternal youth," cries Peter Pan. In the world of Peter and Wendy there is no room for cynicism or scorn. Everything is free, easy and simple.

Wendy and Michael are two very ordinary little children and display this quality in a very ordinary way. They do not like to go to bed, and if there is anything that is a universal characteristic of children it is that. We are allowed a glimpse into their nursery and find it to be typical of many that we know. We hear Michael crying.

Michael. (obstreperous) I won't go to bed, I won't, I won't. Nana, it isn't six o'clock yet. Two minutes more, please, one minute more? Nana, I won't be bathed, I tell you I will not be bathed.

Poor Michael is a real boy but his mother and nurse are very real, too, so we find that Michael was bathed. Even Mr. Darling enters to heighten the comedy and domesticity of this scene.

Mrs. Darling. What is the matter, George dear?



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Michael. (sobbing) I won't go to bed, I won't,  
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Two minutes more, please, one minute more?  
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will not be fussed.

Poor Michael is a real boy but his mother and  
nurse are very real; too, so we find that Michael was  
bathed. Even Mr. Darling enters to heighten the comedy  
and domesticity of this scene.  
Mrs. Darling. What is the matter, George dear?

Mr. Mr. Darling. (as if the word were monstrous)  
 Matter! This tie, it will not tie.  
 (He waxes sarcastic). Not round my  
 neck. Round the bed-post, oh yes;  
 twenty times have I made it up around  
 the bed-post, but round my neck, oh  
 dear no; begs to be excused.

Of course, Mrs. Darling comes to his rescue and  
 that difficulty is overcome only to have new ones  
 arise. Nana, their very unusual canine nurse, offends  
 Mr. Darling and is subjected to a night in the dog  
 house much to her own and Michael's and Wendy's dis-  
 gust. Finally Mr. and Mrs. Darling leave their  
 children firmly tucked in their beds little realizing  
 the adventure which was to be theirs that night. Al-  
 most instantly and without any ado we are brought into  
 contact with that half-fairy mortal, Peter Pan, and  
 Tinkle Bell, who speaks the fairy language of bells.  
 From their little beds, then, Michael and Wendy are  
 transported into fairy land, where one exciting ad-  
 venture follows another. Barrie's genius seems to be  
 at its best in the creation of these unusual and up-  
 roariously funny situations. Michael and Wendy try  
 to fly like Peter and their lack of success at first  
 is very amusing. I have read that Barrie inserted  
 the part about the sprinkling of the fairy dust as  
 a necessary part of the flying procedure to keep  
 down infant mortality. So many children were "think-  
 ing wonderful thoughts as Peter had recommended and



Mr. Darling. (as if the word were monstrous)  
Matter! This lie, it will not sit.  
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the part about the curling of the fairy just as

a necessary part of the flying procedure to keep

down infant mortality. So many children were "think-

ing wonderful thoughts as Peter had recommended and

then with perfect faith hopping off their beds or chairs. Need I say that their thoughts could not have been high enough?

Wendy, as the housekeeper for the fairies, furnishes us with many smiles. She is so very motherly and so very materialistic in a land where material things are of the least importance.

Wendy. Peter, you will remember about changing your flannels, won't you?

Peter. Oh! all right!

Wendy. And this is your medicine. (she puts something into a shell and leaves it on a ledge between two of the trees. It is only water, but she measures it out in drops).

Peter. I won't forget.

Wendy. Peter, what are you to me?

Peter. Your son, Wendy.

Wendy. Oh, good-bye.

Such little humorous and touching passages occur throughout the entire play until we have Michael and Wendy once more restored to their little nursery--but not forever because Wendy must return to do Peter's spring cleaning every year. Peter, the symbol of eternal youth is a lovable little lad who makes us laugh and sometimes makes us cry; but the main thing is to know laughter and tears through him and with him, and be thankful for both.

Dear Brutus is another of Barrie's plays into which we find introduced an element of fantasy. It is a fantasy of a different sort from that in Peter Pan.



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Dear Brutus is another of Barrie's plays into

which we find introduced an element of fantasy. It is

a fantasy of a different sort from that in Peter Pan.

We are dealing in this play with people who have grown up and who have encountered problems of life. It is a serious play in theme but very humorously worked out in its fantasy. The unusual way in which Barrie develops his theme--giving all a second chance in such a very extraordinary way. A wood is introduced from nowhere and there is no attempt made by Barrie to account for it. It is merely one of his creations, and if we know Barrie we shall not question him because he will just smile--a smile of pity it will be because we have failed to understand. There is no dearth of humor in this fantasy. We see the characters in a true light and unless we pity them too much (and this could be possible only in the case of Dearth and Margaret) we must laugh at them. To see them prancing through the woods saying foolish things, acting in a nonsensical manner, would appeal to anyone who had even the slightest sense of the ludicrous.\* And then, of course, comes the peak of fantasy and humor when the people make up to find that they have returned from the realm of "what would happen if" and are once again facing their old trials and tribulations.

Lady Caroline. That is what a person feels. But when did I come? It is very odd, but one feels one ought to say when did one go.

Purdie. She is coming to with a wush!

\*Cf. Scene quoted on Page 55



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 this could be possible only in the case of Gertrude and  
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 the people wake up to find that they have returned  
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 Lady Caroline. That is what a person feels. But  
 when did I come? It is very odd,  
 but one feels one ought to say  
 when did one go.  
 She is coming to with a wobble.  
 Puddle.

Matey. (under the hammer). Mr.....Purdie!  
 Lady Caroline.Mrs. Coade!  
 Matey. The Gov'nor! My clothes!  
 Lady Caroline.One is in evening dress!  
 Joanna. (charmed to explain). You will understand clearly in a minute, Carolyn. You didn't really take that clerkship, Jim; you went into domestic service; but in the essentials you haven't altered.  
 Purdie. (pleasantly). I'll have my shaving water at 7:30 sharp, Matey.  
 Matey. (mechanically). Very good, sir.  
 Lady Caroline. Sir? Midsummer Eve! The wood!  
 Purdie. Yes, hold on to the wood.  
 Matey. You are..you are...you are Lady Caroline Laney!  
 Lady Caroline. It is Matey, the butler!  
 Mabel. You seemed quite happy with him, you know, Lady Caroline.  
 Joanna.(nicely)We won't tell.  
 Lady Caroline. (subsiding). Caroline,Matey! And I seemed to like it! How horrible!  
 Mrs. Coade.(expressing a general sentiment). It is rather difficult to see what we should do next.

The seriousness of this theme and the great success Barrie has had in permeating it with an unusual fantasy and a healthy humor are good indications of height to which a genius unshackled by the conventions of materialism can attain.

In A Kiss for Cinderella, Barrie has created a modern Cinderella who is much more lovable and sweet than the girl of fairy tale fame. He has given to his creation a very ordinary appearance. Externally she is any little girl about ten or twelve years old; internally she is a little person who can withdraw herself sufficiently from the hard facts of life to



(under the hammer). Mr. .... Purdie!  
 Lady Caroline. Mrs. Corde!  
 Water. The Gov'nant! My clothes!  
 Lady Caroline. One is in evening dress!  
 (chained to exclaim). You will under-  
 stand clearly in a minute, Carolyn.  
 You didn't really take that night-  
 ship, did you want into domestic  
 service; but in the meantime you  
 haven't altered.  
 Purdie. (pleasingly). I'll have my shadow water  
 at 7:30 sharp, Water.  
 Water. (mechanically). Very good, sir.  
 Lady Caroline. Sir? Mithras! The wood!  
 Purdie. Yes, hold on to the wood.  
 Water. You are... you are Lady Caroline  
 Water!  
 Lady Caroline. It is Water, the butter!  
 Water. You seemed quite happy with him.  
 you know, Lady Caroline.  
 (nicely) We won't tell.  
 Lady Caroline. (amazingly). Carolyn Water! And  
 I seemed to like it! How horrible!  
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 creation a very ordinary appearance. Externally she  
 is any little girl about ten or twelve years old;  
 internally she is a little person who can withdraw  
 herself sufficiently from the hard facts of life to

dream so tensely that she believes, knows that they will come true. It is in this fairy dream that the full humor of the play is epitomized. Cinderella sits on the steps to wait for her godmother who she is sure will come even though the policeman, who has become a very good friend, has tried to suggest very kindly and gently that perhaps her godmother will be detained. But as the poor child is huddled there the long-awaited godmother does come and with Cinderella, we are transported to the beautiful ballroom of Buckingham Palace. Here we do not get a true idea of what a ball might be; rather do we conceive what it was in Cinderella's mind.

Godmother. Now let this be my down-trodden god-child's ball, not as balls are, but as they are conceived to be in a little chamber in Cinderella's head.

The hall is gorgeous spectacle and it is an equally humorous and fantastic sight. (Down the golden steps at the back comes the Lord Mayor easily recognizable by his enormous chain).

Lord Mayor. O yes, O yes, make way everyone and also myself, for Lord Times.

(This is a magnificent person created by Cinderella on learning from Mr. Bodie that the press is all powerful and that the Times is the press).

O yes, O yes, make way for the Censor. (Cinderella



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(This is a magnificent person created by Cinderella)

on learning from Mr. Bodie that the press is all

powerful and that the press is the press).

O yes, O yes, make way for the Canon. (Cinderella

has had a good deal of trouble over this person, of whom she had heard a great deal in war time, without meeting anyone who can tell her what he is like. She has done her best, and he is long and black and thin, dressed tightly as a fish, and carries an executioner's axe).

And so on are the characters of Cinderella's mind humorously and fantastically introduced. The King and Queen owe their conception to a pack of cards. His Highness Prince Hard-to-Please is no one less than her policeman friend. The introduction of guests being concluded, the humor of the situation is intensified by the fun indulged in by the author in his choice of a wife for the Prince. The climax comes when our little friend is chosen and there is a cry--"Make way for Cinderella." This little child's dream has a reality for her that is lasting. It is more permanent indeed than much which we like to consider as fact. Cinderella, the poor little lovable drudge, has an abundance of romance in her affection-starved heart. She is one of Barrie's most successfully portrayed characters. She is capable, she is kindly, she has humor, she might even be a Dicken's character.

#### E. Stage Directions

If there is anything particularly characteristic



has had a good deal of trouble over this person, of whom she had heard a great deal in war time, without meeting anyone who can tell her what he is like. She has done her best, and he is long and black and thin, dressed lightly as a fish, and carries an executioner's axe).

And so on are the characters of Cinderella's mind humorously and fantastically introduced. The King and Queen are their conception of a pack of cards. His Highness Prince Hard-to-Please is no one less than her policeman friend. The introduction of guests being concluded, the horror of the situation is intensified by the fun indulged in by the author in his choice of a wife for the Prince. The climax comes when our little friend is chosen and there is a cry--"Make way for Cinderella." This little child's dress has a quality for her that is lasting. It is more permanent indeed than much which we like to consider as fact. Cinderella, the poor little lovable drudge, has an abundance of romance in her affection-starved heart. She is one of Barrie's most successfully portrayed characters. She is capable, she is kindly, she has humor, she might even be a Dickens's character.

#### E. Stage Directions

If there is anything particularly characteristic

of Barrie, it is his stage directions. There is without a doubt no modern writer who makes such copious and successful use of stage directions. With Barrie they become more than mere directions. They are glimpses into characters' minds; they are sometimes short brilliant essays. "Barrie's stage directions are among the most original and most brilliant compositions that have ever flowed from their author's pen. They are unlike any other stage directions in the history of the drama; they not only establish as intimate and fluid a relation between the play and the reader as exists between the actor and the spectator; they are, and are intended to be centrifugal; they throw the emphasis away from the individual characters towards human nature in general, and make the reader aware of himself, and of his identity with the follies, weaknesses and selfishness exhibited on the stage."\*

Barrie's stage directions, like all of Barrie's works, have that inherent quality of meditative humor. It is as if Barrie were sitting beside us during the performance and "nudging us on taking our hand" at this moment and at that to be sure that we share his own delight at the unfolding of his comedy.\*\* Some of the most humorous stage directions are to be found in

\*Wm. Lyon Phelps Essays on Modern Dramatists Page 38

\*\*Wm. Lyon Phelps Preface to Representative Play of J.M. Barrie



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Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire. So very good are they all that it is, indeed, difficult to select the best. At the very beginning of the play, Barrie comments on Amy and Ginevra in a jocular and satirical tone which gives a better insight into their characters than if he had written character sketches about them both.

Cosmo. All I can say is that if father tries to kiss me, I shall kick him.

(If Amy makes any reply the words arrive upside-down and they are unintelligible. The maid announces Miss Dunbar. Then Amy rises, brings her head to the position in which they are usually carried, and she and Ginevra look into each other's eyes. They always do this when they meet, though they meet several times a day, and it is worth doing, for what they see in those pellucid pools is love eternal. Thus they loved at school (in their last two terms) and thus they will love till the grave encloses them. These thoughts, and others even more beautiful, are in their minds as they gaze at each other now. No man will ever be able to say "Amy" or to say "Ginevra" with such a trill as they are saying it).

Unconsciously Barrie allows us a glimpse at his own mind. We see that he had the happy facility to see things in a humorous light without reducing them to the ridiculous.



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own mind. We see that he had the happy facility to  
see things in a humorous light without regarding them  
as the ridiculous.

In Pantaloon, a relatively sombre play, Barrie allows his friend and ally, humor, to creep in.

"With a whirl of his wand that is itself a dance, Harlequin makes the door fly open. He enters, says the stage directions, but what it means is that somehow he is now in the room. He probably knows that Columbine is beneath the table, as she hides so often and there are so few places in the room, to hide in, but he searches for her elsewhere, even in a jug, to her extreme mirth, for, of course, she is peeping at him."

In The Twelve Pound Look, Barrie shows us that he fully grasps the funny side of a situation and he would do all in his power to have us do likewise. Harry Sims has been chosen for Knighthood and he is rehearsing for the ceremony. Mrs. Sims is the audience and impersonates the august one who is about to dub her Harry, Knight. She is seated regally. Her jeweled shoulders proclaim her husband's generosity. She must be an extraordinarily proud and happy woman, yet she has a drawn face and shrinking way as if there were some one near her of whom she is afraid. She claps her hands, as the signal for Harry. He enters bowing, and with a graceful swerve of the leg. He is only partly in costume, the sword and the real stockings



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her hands, as the signal for Harry. He enters bowing,

and with a graceful sweep of the leg. He is only

partly in costume, the sword and the real stockings

not having yet arrived. With a gliding motion that is only delayed while one leg makes up on the other, he reaches his wife, and, going on one knee, raises her hand superbly to his lips. She taps him on the shoulder and with a paper knife and says huskily, "Rise, Sir Harry." He rises, bows and glides about the room, going on his knees to various articles of furniture and rising from each a knight).

It is this sort of ability that makes Barrie so different from other mortals. He can not only conceive but he can express his conception so that others may see.

The Old Lady Shows Her Medals is pregnant with tell-tale humorous and characteristic stage directions. When Mr. Willings comes to announce to "Mrs." Dowey that her son has a leave of absence we read:

(There is a commotion about finding a worthy chair for the reverent, and there is also some furtive pulling down of sleeves, but he stands surveying the ladies through his triumphant smile).

What great attention to details and trivialities! It is this that makes for homeliness and completeness. It is this plus Barrie's ability to express what others can only think that give his stage directions incomparable originality and individuality.

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## V PHILOSOPHY UNDERLYING BARRIE'S HUMOR

"Courage is the thing. All goes if courage goes."\*

To me this is the theory which underlies Barrie's plays. He has clothed his doctrine in the pleasing garments of healthy satire and bright, sparkling humor and yet it is none the less discernible because of this. Some critics are of the opinion that Barrie expressed no philosophy or theories through his plays. I do not agree with this at all. Nor do I think that Barrie is a Kant or an Aristotle. He is essentially a playwright who has an outlook on life, and he can not avoid expressing it through his writings. This general message conveyed through the plays is the lesson of courage. Barrie says, "We should thank our Creator thrice times daily for courage. It is the love of virtue--the rib of Himself that God sent down to His children."\*\* Professor Phelps over and above being an ardent admirer and friend of Barrie is perhaps one of his most learned critics. In the preface to a volume of Barrie's most representative plays, Phelps has said: "Behind Barrie's plays lies the gospel on Courage." He continues to illustrate his point by mentioning characters whom Barrie had imbued with this admirable quality. There is Crichton. He



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showed an unusual amount of moral courage (and, of course, it is moral courage that Barrie has reference to.) He never flinches. When the doctrine of equality is forced upon him periodically he sighs but goes through with his part especially well. On the island he displays an unusual amount of both physical and mental courage. He bravely assumes command of the situation and in his effort to do what is most wise, opposes the indignant Lord Loam, the haughty Mary and the epigrammatic Ernest. It is in the last act, however, that we are allowed to view full depth and sincerity of Crichton's courage. He is very fond of Mary and yet he had the strength to give her up. "In giving up Lady Mary, Crichton accomplished something fine, for it was not a mere butler giving up a lady, but a man giving up a woman, indeed, at the time, the woman."\*

Maggie Shand is a courageous little person. She is never so completely thwarted by circumstances that she does not recover. She always smiles through her tears. She is a rejected lover when we first see her and although it makes her a bit wistful, she maintains a hopeful outlook on life. Later in the play we find her a cast-off wife. She does not sit and sulk over her awful plight but immediately has the courage to attack the difficulty and overcome it. She is success-



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ful, too, as we might suppose she would be. Maggie is a conqueror and it is her indomitable courage that lights her way to the acquiring of what she wants.

Mrs. Morland in Mary Rose has courage. Her life has been made very unusual by the extraordinary disappearance of her daughter and yet she manages to be hopeful for better things to come. And surely no one could have much more courage than our "criminally" inclined "Mrs." Dowey. It was not an insignificant thing for her to adopt a full grown six-feet-two inch son from among the British army. It took still more courage not to be overcome when he put in a very imposing appearance and he was not the affectionate, loving lad whom she had upheld so nobly before her neighbors.

Phoebe and Susan Throssel, the very essence of feminine charm, are not without a goodly supply of Barrie's favorite quality. When Phoebe is disappointed in her Valentine, she does not sit down and weep. She merely says it is a misunderstanding, and she goes about her household duties as if nothing had happened. She has that happy facility, which is an off-spring of courage, of being able to conceal her feeling from the gossiping curious world. An unflinching courage it was that enabled the two sisters, Phoebe and Susan, to open a school when their fortune had dwindled too low



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for convenience sake. It was much against their principles, but they just figuratively closed their eyes, gritted their teeth and pushed forward with their colors flying high. Courage, courage! It oozes from every page of Barrie's plays. Sometimes it is subordinated for the purpose of emphasizing a more immediate theory, but it is never omitted entirely. And it isn't a weepy courage, either. It is an indomitable courage made to flow gently and unobtrusively beneath the wide stream of rippling humor. When Barrie is most courageous, he is most humorous for it is then that he is smiling most bravely through tears.

Occasionally, Barrie uses humor as a vehicle in which to convey one of his pet theories. He makes us laugh but he makes us also think. One of his most widespread doctrines is presented through the whimsically humorous Maggie Shand. It is, that woman can exert a great influence upon man. In fact the whole theme is, of course, "That the successful man owes everything to a woman."\* Barrie does not make his play too sermon-like. As a matter of fact he so seductively coats his lesson with invigorating satire and meditative humor that we discover we have swallowed the pill and it has become a part of ourselves before we realized it. John Shand, the husband, who arrived



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without "any one's help at all" has been used by Barrie to confirm his opinion of feminine influence. He is humorously boastful of his prowess and carried away with the self-satisfying idea that he has done it by himself. There is in this a note of irony for Barrie has already let us, the audience, in on the secret that Maggie was the source of his inspiration and the parent of many of his "Shandisms" which had been so well received in Parliament. Barrie raises womanhood to a height which is almost unexplained by some of our more cynic authors of the present time. He exalts women until they are really remarkable creatures. He portrays women whom we would be proud to call mother. Without a doubt it is the beautiful concept of his own mother which remained so clearly in his mind that prevented him from attributing to womanhood qualities that were ignoble. Maggie, with whom we are now concerned, is no prude or prig but she is a lovable, witty, humorous character, quaint but none the less beautiful because of it. In fact, in her uniqueness lies the charm which attracts the reader to her. Maggie is Barrie's exemplar of the vast influence which woman is capable of wielding over man.

Another theory, which, we have dealt with in too



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Another theory, which we have dealt with in too

great detail previously to treat at any length here, is the permanency and universality of class distinction. The Admirable Crichton embodies this idea. Barrie says, through his original play, that equality among men can not be successfully maintained. He attempts to prove this statement through the basically humorous situation which he creates in The Admirable Crichton. He makes it evident that he thinks the equality of man is sheer nonsense. He turns the Loam family and their butler Crichton completely topsy-turvy. At first he shows how distasteful democracy is to the butler because, of course, if the butler is equal to the peer, then the page will be on an equal footing with the butler and the staid Crichton can not conceive anything more ignominious to a man of his profession. Then comes the period during which all artificial barriers to social distinction are removed--the time spent on the island, Barrie through comedy of situation and dialogue discloses the fact that men are still very unequal although positions are reversed. Crichton is decidedly the man of the group. He is well chosen "Gov." of their new home. We can understand this clearly when we know that he was the only one who salvaged anything from the wreck; the one who gave all the orders even to making Ernest work. There was still inequality



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but it was a reverse inequality. Equality, then, Barrie seemed to say could not exist even under most favorable conditions. Before the play draws to a close we catch another glimpse of things righted. Crichton is again the docile butler and Lord Loam the master.

There is a third theory which I believe must have been one of Barrie's favorites because it is loudly proclaimed in Dear Brutus, distinctly reechoed in another. I refer to Barrie's doctrine of the inefficacy of a second chance to enable us to better ourselves. In itself it is rather a pessimistic thought. We all like to think that if a second chance came to us we would use it so much better than the first. It would be useless for us to attempt to expose a cheerful side to such a dreary notion because I do not think it could be honestly found. There is, however, much humor in the way in which Barrie lays his idea before us. If we could, (and it is very easy) read this play without stopping at any length upon the pessimism of the idea, we should find that Barrie was introducing us to some very funny people and that we were witnessing some equally humorous scenes. The scene which, for pure humor can not be equalled by any other part of the play, we have already quoted



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and we shall not repeat it. We have reference to the scene in the woods when "Carolyn" and Jim (Matey) are husband and wife. Then there are other glimpses of the "quirks and quiddities" of human nature at which we may and sometimes must laugh, yet at the same moment Barrie is tugging at our heart strings and with our laughter sometimes comes a sob. The most characteristically Barrie type of humor occurs with the return of the party to the world of present actuality. "The transformation of the characters under our very eyes from the impossible to the real is the very quintessence of the impish Barriesque satire and poetic humor."\*

Purdie. I am feeling very funny. Did one of you tap me just now on the forehead? (their hands have also gone to their foreheads).

Mabel. I think I have been in this room before.

Purdie. (flinching) There is something coming rushing back to me.

Mabel. I seem to know that coffee set. If I do the lid of the milk jug is chipped. It is!

Joanna. I can't remember this man's name; but I am sure it begins with L.

Mabel. Lob.

Purdie. Lob.

Joanna. Lob.

Purdie. Mabel, your dress.

Mabel. (beholding it) How on earth!

Joanna. My dress! (to Purdie) You were in knickerbockers in the wood.

Purdie. And so I am now. (He sees he is not) Where did I change? The wood! Let me think. The wood-the wood--certainly but the wood wasn't the wood.

Then Purdie seeks to discover just who really is



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Barrie. I am feeling very funny. Did one of you tap me just now on the forehead? (Their hands have also gone to their foreheads.) Mabel. I think I have been in this room before. (Flushing) There is something coming rushing back to me. Mabel. I seem to know that coffee eat. If I do the lid of the milk jug is cracked. If I! Joanna. I can't remember this man's name; but I am sure it begins with L. Mabel. Loh. Purdie. Loh. Joanna. Loh. Mabel. Your dress. (Beholding it) How on earth! My dress! (To Purdie) You were in kitchen- Joanna. books in the wood. Purdie. And so I am now. (He sees he is not where did I change? The wood! Let me think. The wood-the wood--certainly not the wood wasn't the wood.

Then Purdie seeks to discover just who really is

his wife and this adds to the ludicrousness of the situation. So full of comedy is this scene that for the time being we are much more conscious of the fun than we are the theory which it clothes.

This same idea is found again in a less illustrative form in the third act of The Admirable Crichton. In Barrie's stage directions which are perhaps, the best samples of the individuality of his genius, we read:

(At this moment, a wiry athletic figure in skins darkens the window. He is carrying two pails, which are suspended from a pole on his shoulder, and he is Ernest. We should say that he is Ernest completely changed if we were of those who hold that people change.) In the midst of a description, the humor of which is striking, Barrie tucks away the theme of Dear Brutus. It is contained in the words, "If we were of those who hold that people change..." Barrie definitely believes that persons would not act any more wisely if they were given a second chance, and he writes a play which is redundant with comic moments to prove it.

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Best Brains. It is contained in the words, "If we  
were of those who hold that people change..." Barrie  
deliberately believes that persons would not act any more  
wisely if they were given a second chance, and he  
writes a play which is redundant with comic moments  
to prove it.

\*\*\*\*\*

## VI BARRIE'S HUMOR AS JUDGED BY CRITICS

It is always enlightening to look at a man not only through your own eyes but through the eyes of others. Barrie has attained no little recognition among the authors of our day. He is rated "as the foremost man of letters." There are others would not place him on so high a pinnacle. It is, however, with Barrie's humor, that we are most concerned at the present. How great a part has his humor played in bringing him such recognition? How does he rate as a humorist and what judgements have been made regarding the quality of Barrie's humor? Professor Phelps of Yale, a frequently quoted authority on Barrie, says, "Barrie has done more to elevate the English stage than any other man of our time. And he has accomplished this simply by writing plays that are built on the permanent foundations of nature, that are full of action, shining with brilliant dialogue, sparkling with wit and humor, heart-shaking with tragedy, and clean as the west wind."\*

Phelps' opinion should carry some weight because he has made an intense study of Barrie, he knows him personally, and he is regarded as an unprejudiced, intelligent critic.

Thomas Moulton has written a book upon Barrie which



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Thomas Knott has written a book upon Hartley which

appears to be a scholarly treatise of the man and his works. We find that Moulton says that Barrie's humor is a "new humor that began and, being as much a part of him as his bodily movements and personal habits, will end with Barrie."\* He stresses the individuality and uniqueness of the playwright's humor.

Richard Le Gallienne has written several lengthy articles upon Barrie and he has reviewed several of his plays. In part, he says, "Barrie is a gently, meditative humorist, with a heart one-half laughter and one half tears."\*\* With few but pointed words Le Gallienne seems to have arrived at the very essence of Barrie's adherence to the comic muse.

Several years ago L. Wilkinson contributed an article to the Dial entitled, Sir James M. Barrie, Confectioner and Parlor Magician. He concludes his account by saying that it is enjoyable "to turn from the unpleasant truths of Shaw, Galsworthy and Wells to the harmless, friendly humor of this Scotch sentimentalist. Barrie is never disquieting, never bitter--never offends moral proprieties. His humor is always wholesome, safe."\*\*\* He, too, like Le Gallienne stresses the gentleness, the kindness of Barrie's humor.

Perhaps no one speaks so emphatically and so directly of Sir James as a humorist as does William

\*Thomas Moulton Barrie Page 21

\*\*Richard Le Gallienne 1921 New York Times

\*\*\*Dial 75:176-9 August '23



appears to be a scholarly treatise of the man and his works. He finds that Moliere says that Barthe's humor is a "new humor that bears and, being as much a part of him as his bodily movements and personal habits, will end with him." He stresses the individuality and uniqueness of the playwright's humor.

Richard Le Gallienne has written several lengthy articles upon Barthe and he has reviewed several of his plays. In part, he says, "Barthe is a gently, seductive humorist, with a heart one-half laughter and one half tears."\*\* With few but pointed words Le Gallienne seems to have arrived at the very essence of Barthe's adherence to the comic muse.

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Perhaps no one speaks so enthusiastically and so directly of Mr. James as a humorist as does William

Archer. He says in his book The Old Drama and the New: "No rational being doubts that Sir James M. Barrie is a humorist of delightful genius who happens to have an extraordinary knack of expressing himself in dramatic form and even adapting his work to the strong exigencies of modern realistic technique."

Ashley Thorndike, who is regarded as an authority on English comedy, says that Barrie is "tenuous and unsteady in his mocking and satire, always delicate and whimsical rather than robust in his humor, sometimes getting too much sentiment and nonsense for the fun to savor. He has, perhaps, excelled all his contemporaries in the revelation of human nature with fresh truth and humor."\*

It might be said that we have purposely avoided quoting unfavorable references to Barrie's humor since those whom we have cited have been most favorable. This is not the case, however, for we searched diligently for a less complimentary attitude toward Barrie. Such was not forthcoming, however, for it seems that every one who bothered at all with Barrie liked him, then they would not disparage his humor, for without a doubt it was the quaintness and unusualness of it that attracted them.

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## VIII SUMMARY

It has been my purpose in this thesis to analyze to some extent Barrie's humor as expressed in his plays. The first three sections of the thesis are devoted to the purpose of establishing a comprehensive background for the reader. I have introduced my subject by giving my reasons for choosing it, by explaining the manner in which I intended to approach and treat it. In the second section I have mentioned the facts of Barrie's life which seemed to have had an influence on his plays and in particular on the humor expressed in them. So that we might have a common ground as to our understanding of humor I have devoted a chapter to its history and its interpretation.

The body of the thesis is contained in the fourth chapter where I have classified the plays under certain headings and have attempted to illustrate these various groupings with excerpts from the best known of Barrie's plays. I am of the opinion that there is a definite philosophy underlying Barrie's humor and in section five I have attempted to point out this. Courage seems to me to be the inherent quality in all of Barrie's comedies. He has, however, set forth particular theories in such plays as What Every Woman Knows, Dear Brutus, and the Admirable Crichton; and



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I have attempted to expose these beliefs. That my thesis might not seem too unimportant by expressing only my personal opinions I have included the views of others better qualified than myself to judge Barrie's humor. Among these are William Lyon Phelps, a friend and a critic, Thomas Moulton, a biographer, Richard Le Gallienne, a reviewer of many of his plays, William Archer, an authority on drama both old and new, and finally, Ashley Thorndike, whose book on English comedy has been widely received. In the conclusion I have extended in the words of Sir James M. Barrie, himself, an invitation to the reader to find recourse from the disagreeable things of life in his plays which are, says Phelps, "the shows of the world in which Barrie gives us pictures of all humanity--our follies, our impossible and futile dreams, our sordidness, our nobility, our vanity, without a trace of venom or of scorn, without a flavor of superiority; he loves men, women, and children. But in him love is never blind."\*

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